

THE REACTIONARY REVIEW

NEW CENTURY

Angel Series

AUDEMUS

Number 1

AND WE HAVE NOT SPOKEN YET

THE VOICE WHICH "HAS NOT BEEN HEARD IN BRITAIN FOR CENTURIES"

IN the year of our Lord 1987, Mr. Peregrine Worsthorne, then editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, was discussing the decline in morality and social cohesion which, far from abating, seemed to increase with the increasing prosperity of the nation in Mrs. Thatcher's heyday. He spoke of the superficial talk of "Victorian values" and of Mrs. Thatcher's declaration that people must once again be taught the difference between right and wrong. "Such aspirations," he said, "madden because of their total impracticality in a secular, rationalistic, democratic and liberal society."

"On the moral front," he continued, "she is a wet, no more prepared to carry her puritan rhetoric into practice than were Churchill, Eden, Macmillan and Butler, say, to carry their capitalist rhetoric into practice. Until recently, that did not matter, because the decline in morals could plausibly be blamed on the permissive progressive. Soon, however, that alibi will fail and there will be no way in which bourgeois values can escape indictment. The Left's egalitarian indictment is familiar and stale. But what of the inegalitarian, authoritarian Right which has not been heard in Britain for centuries?"

Yes, what of that voice? Surely no voice in the course of our history has been so effectively silenced and for so long. Surely no current of thought and sensibility has been so utterly obscured and occulted, so systematically smirched and misrepresented, and yet, far from dying, has continued to attract, in one form or another, many of the finest minds of the present century from W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

The extent to which this current has been occulted is made clear in Mr. Worsthorne's next words. "Idle and dangerous speculation, no doubt," he proceeds, anticipating the stock criticisms and hardly daring to rebut them. *Dangerous?* Yes, that is what they say without fail. And yet, in all the years when Eastern Europe lay in the grip of what is now, be-

latedly, admitted on all sides to have been a cruel and aggressive tyranny, not one of the countless academics, artists and other men in public and intellectual life who flirted—and more than flirted—with the vicious creed which animated that tyranny—not one of them was seriously called dangerous. Yet, when a tentative voice is raised to suggest that the inegalitarian Right might speak again—not rise again, but merely speak again;—not speak with a voice backed by half a continent of tanks and missiles, but merely express an opinion devoid of all worldly power;—then the whole of the modern world knows that it has heard something dangerous.

Why should this be? The normal explanation which would occur to a modern political protagonist would be that a campaign of propaganda (to use an unpleasant modern term) lies behind this ludicrously disproportionate conditioned response. There would be some truth in such an explanation, but it would be partial. We approach closer to the heart of the truth when we say that the modern mind—or rather the modernist mind—perceives by a kind of instinct that real traditional thought is dangerous, and that it presents what is, in the final analysis, the most terrible danger of all—a *philosophic* danger. Bolshevism is not dangerous. It does not threaten to dismantle the modern *Weltanschauung* Stone by Stone. On the contrary, it is itself one of those Stones, and one which lies close to the keystone. Traditionalism is dangerous. For the modern world it is the most dangerous thing of all, and the modern world, whether by analysis or (more often) by mere instinct, does not fail to recognise this fact. The modern mind recognises in traditionalism an intellectual force which, once unleashed, would not stop—of its very nature *could not stop*—until it had demolished the entire edifice of modernism and left not one Stone standing on another—even as modernism itself is incapable of stopping until it has annihilated every last vestige of ➤ ➤

THE REACTIONARY REVIEW

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST PERIODICAL OF THE 21st CENTURY

In a certain sense, *The Reactionary Review* is intended to be the *Yellow Book* of these new '90s.

Just as the *Yellow Book*—or rather, the spirit of the *Yellow Book*—epitomised the late-Victorian reaction against all that was eminently Victorian, and challenged Victorianism at a time when Victorianism was still the ruling power, so *The Reactionary Review* sets out to crystallise the late-20th-century reaction against 20th-century modernism and to speak the words that a strong but dying age must fears to hear, because it knows them to be true.

We are the voice of the new *fin de siècle*, and if our first manifestation is not in the sphere of art, that is because art, in this age, has no power to shock. Art has been trying to shock for nine weary decades, and there are no proprieties left to violate. The pruderies and proprieties of the late 20th century lie primarily in the political and social field. That is the field where the sacred cattle of modernism are grazing; grown sleek and fat upon decades of protection from the smallest question or criticism.

Not, of course, that we mean to be mere political commentators. That would be dull. Neither do we propose to shock merely for the sake of shocking. That would be unnecessary. We shall shock simply by speaking freely. It is so long since any one has spoken freely.

The certainties of 20th-century modernism become less certain every day; and yet so many things are still not said. We shall say them.

Everything in *The Reactionary Review* should epitomise the spirit of the new century—in conformity with our view that it is in all things and not merely in the realm of theory that one's heart must be expressed. What could one say of a paper which claimed to reject the modern world and yet adopted all the slick stylistic tricks of modern lay-out and design? The same as one would say of a traditionalist writer who referred to women by their naked surnames, of a traditionalist undergraduate who wore jeans or of a traditionalist family which watched television. The lay-out and typography of this magazine strive to reflect the spirit of the new century—and in particular, that eclectic blend of flamboyant deco-futurism and æsthetic archaism which has been called post-post-modernist.

We do not propose to restrict ourselves to the obviously political. Our purview will be the whole cultural sphere. The books we review will not normally be new ones; they will fall into two categories:—old and very old. By

old, we mean new: that is, those published within the last decade or so, which are old only by the standards of periodical reviewers and other vulgar men. There are two reasons for this, viz. a) we are not immersed in the stream of the modern world, and when such a rare event as a new book worth reviewing occurs, we are unlikely to hear of it for a few years and b) we do not regard our reviews as mere ephemera. They need not, of course, be as polished literary works as Lord Macaulay's delightful essay on Addison (which is actually a review of a book by one Miss Lucy Aikin), but if they be not essays of some merit which say something of enduring interest which may or may not be connected with the book under discussion, then they have no place in these pages. Similarly, a book which is not worth reviewing three or a dozen years after its appearance is not worth reviewing at all.

We make no guarantee in this matter, however, and trust that our readers will forgive us if we occasionally review a new book.

The Reactionary Review is not the voice of a particular sect or party, but is open to all who can express fiercely intelligent and calmly audacious anti-modernist ideas with eloquence or elegance, cogency or charm.

Many of our contributors will use *noms de guerre* and their identities will be protected absolutely—in some cases we may not know them ourselves. This policy is not merely amusing. In these decaying days it can be damaging for a man in public life to express views heretical to the dogmas of modernism:—that is why so few such heretical views are expressed, and when expressed are often couched in timid or apologetic terms. We wish our contributors to have the fullest freedom to say exactly what they mean without fear of illegitimate pressure; to enjoy the same freedom that the Marxist academic or television producer enjoys. To that end we are prepared to sacrifice, where necessary, the appearance of an illustrious name in these columns. It is a small sacrifice, for, perhaps curiously, the reactionary is—at least in these times—no respecter of persons. Truth is equally true and foolishness no less foolish regardless of who may enunciate them. Indeed, it is even possible for a man to have achieved the highest honour that the modern world is capable of granting and still to have some opinion of value. We expect our readers to be possessed of wit enough to appreciate work on its inherent merit—and we rather fancy we shall not be disappointed.

NEW CENTURY

3

←← warmth, humanity and decency.

The faceless concrete block is the architecture of modernism, the thin screechings of atonalism and the animal yowlings of "rock" are its music, and if these things are already somewhat *passé*, that is but a sign that modernism has passed its peak. "By their fruits shall ye know them"; and these cultural fruits disclose the heart and soul of modernism in a manner far clearer than many volumes of explication might achieve.

The political obsession—the doctrine of the Primacy of Politics, which is in itself a symptom of the crude, materialistic externalism of the modern mind—is such that the modernist does not normally take alarm at traditional thought and sensibility except when it is expressed in political terms. The average modernist, for example, does not consider it "dangerous" that modernist architecture is gradually being displaced by quasi-traditional forms. Those more closely involved with the field in question, however, are well aware of the danger, and react in precisely the same terms in which the lay modernist reacts to the expression of traditionalism in the political sphere. Professor Colin St. John Wilson, former head of Architecture at Cambridge said of H.R.H. Prince Charles's espousal of traditional architecture: "You cannot put the clock back. The Nazis tried and look what happened to them." Mr. Martin Pawley, consultant to the United Nations said "The Prince of Wales's Ten Principles of Good Architecture are in the same league as the Principles of Man enshrined by Hitler." Extraordinary statements, one may think. Mr. Mira Bar-Hillel, commenting upon them in *The Chartered Surveyor* of 9th November 1989 wrote: "...the words Nazi and Fascist have been used for the past 30 years in all schools of architecture to humiliate, taunt and even dispose of any students who showed an interest in classical design. It is this situation which made the Prince decide to set up his own school of architecture."

Of course, if by "Nazi" and "Fascist" these people were referring to the actual historical movements which bore those names, and which were no less modernist than any other branch of socialism, the insults would be meaningless. But if the terms are being used—as they are often used in these days—as vulgar and inaccurate cultural swear-words to be applied, with unconscious irony, to any expression of traditional thought or feeling, then they are not misplaced, and neither is the hysteria which lies behind them—inspired by the knowledge that a classical revival, even of

the most modest proportions, contains within it the seeds of the whole traditionalist *Weltanschauung*, which, if allowed to germinate, could hardly restrict their growth to the sphere of architecture, but must quickly strike root in every area of the cultural whole (symbolised as always, and as always in the most misconceived terms, by the political).

In short, traditionalism, in whatever form it may take, is correctly conceived by the modernist mind as dangerous;—as, indeed, the most dangerous thing possible, because to modernism, especially now that it has entered the first stages of decline, tradition is Nemesis.

It will be seen from the foregoing that we by no means interpret reaction purely, or even primarily, in political terms. Every form of cultural expression has become a battleground in the war between traditional and anti-traditional values. Nor is it our contention that every sphere of expression is "ultimately political". On the contrary, we hold that all cultural expressions, politics included, are governed by an underlying *philosophy* (using the term in a far broader and deeper sense than that accorded to it by the modern academic world) which is, in itself, neither political nor literary nor linguistic nor musical nor architectural, but must express itself through each of these forms and through every other which contributes to the cultural totality of a civilisation. This should not be a particularly startling or difficult concept. Every one knows, for example, what is (or was) meant by terms such as "*avant-garde*" or "advanced" when applied to political views, to a piece of music or to a work of art or literature; and it is clear enough that while the various applications of the term cannot be identical in practice, they refer to the same spirit operating in different spheres. If the erstwhile *avant garde* is rapidly becoming a rearguard in many of those spheres, that is but a sign of the timeliness of a publication such as *The Reactionary Review*.

Why *The Reactionary Review*? There are many arguments against such a name: that it seems too excessive and unmeasured; that it might give the impression of a mere blind infatuation with the past; most important of all, that it seems likely to give the impression that our beliefs are but a reaction against the innovations of modernism—a secondary phenomenon, a by-product, as it were, of modernism itself, rather than a principled body of thought and sensibility which long antedates the modern aberration and against which that aberration itself is a mere reaction or "protestant" movement. *The Traditionalist Review*, or some

such title, had, it might be argued, had more dignity and more assurance. Against this, we suggest that the term *traditionalist*, while we own that it describes us better and more accurately, is one which is used in a wide variety of different ways, and appropriated by many different sorts of person and organisation. The term *reactionary*, for all its regrettable brashness, nails our colours firmly to the mast. Those who are afraid of such a term are warned off, and well warned off. Those who, upon hearing it, feel the light of battle enkindle in their breasts are almost certainly Kindred Spirits. It is a rallying-call, and that, for all its faults, is why we have chosen it.

The fate of the word *reactionary* is almost a paradigm of our times. A few decades ago it could be used only as a term of scorn and contempt. Today, we have heard it used with grudging, and sometimes not-so-grudging, admiration. It is even used as a neutral, if somewhat cavalier, description. A journalist, who is not hostile to her, has described Mrs. Thatcher as "establishing her reactionary credentials in Europe." No one, however, has, I think, gone so far as to adopt the term to himself. That is a step which was yet to be taken, and we have taken it. What will become of the term in the future, we cannot say. Perhaps our use of it will be but a temporary device, serving a purpose for a time; or perhaps it will become the name of a movement or a sensibility, used in all seriousness in the coming century, for many such names have begun life as jocular and insulting by-names:—the words *Tory*, *Whig* and even *Christian* fall into this category.

The term has the merit of being one which makes it clear what we are *not*. One who describes himself as a reactionary is not likely to be a wet conservative (a term which here includes Mrs. Thatcher and many to the "right" of her) of the type which inspired Evelyn Waugh's just dictum: "The trouble with the Conservative party is that it has never tried to turn the clock back by a single minute". Equally, the self-avowed reactionary is unlikely to be a *laissez faire* Capitalist, a Fascist, a Nietzschean Vitalist, a Social Darwinist, a Sociobiologist or an adherent of any other of the modernistic quackeries which have marched under the "right wing" banner during this benighted century.

On the question of "turning the clock back", we hope that our other title, *New Century*, will make it sufficiently clear that we are looking toward the future. Traditionalism does not mean aping the past in all its outward aspects. The simplest statement of tradition-

alism is as follows "Our *principles* are unchanging. Their *applications* may change, but only in ways which keep faith with those unchanging principles." Modernism, on the other hand, is a rejection of unchanging principles, an underlying belief that everything must be demolished and rebuilt according to the latest theories. When the late President Ceausescu of Roumania initiated his plan to destroy thousands of rural villages which had been intact since the Middle Ages and to replace them with purpose-built concrete Agricultural Collectives, he was only doing by violent and unsuitable means what progressive modernism is doing continually in every area of our lives. Indeed, the only reason for the international outrage at this action can have been its suddenness and violence, for similar things have been done and are being done, only more slowly, throughout the world. The Prince of Wales epitomises the matter in the sphere of architecture when he says that modern architects and planners have done to the skyline of London what the Luftwaffe failed to do. And if we look upon the hideous inversion of the manners and morals of our nation, the ruin of its art, the hideousness of its dress, the insanity of its popular "music" and the imposition in every sphere, from the design of motor cars and telephone kiosks to units of money and measurement, of a bleak, inhuman standard of cosmopolitan ugliness, we cannot but conclude that the grimmeſt of tyrants could not have hoped to achieve more, or to destroy more. After the war, the Allies conducted in Germany a programme of "de-Nazification". If some occupying force had imposed upon Britain a fifty-year programme of de-Anglicisation, he could hardly have hoped for better results than those we see now—unless they be those which are yet to be imposed upon us in the name of the monstrous growth called the "European Community".

This, then, is the modernism against which we react. As will be seen, we do so in many different ways, for *The Reactionary Review* is not intended to pursue a particular "line", and is open to traditionalists of many different sorts. We believe that, while modernism continues as powerful as ever, its philosophic heart is dead within it, and we shall argue this case in this and in following issues of this journal. Our task, as reflected in the name *New Century*, is to prepare the way for the thought and sensibility of a re-traditionalised future; and to do this in particular by providing a forum for the expression of thoughts and ideas which have been suppressed and occulted

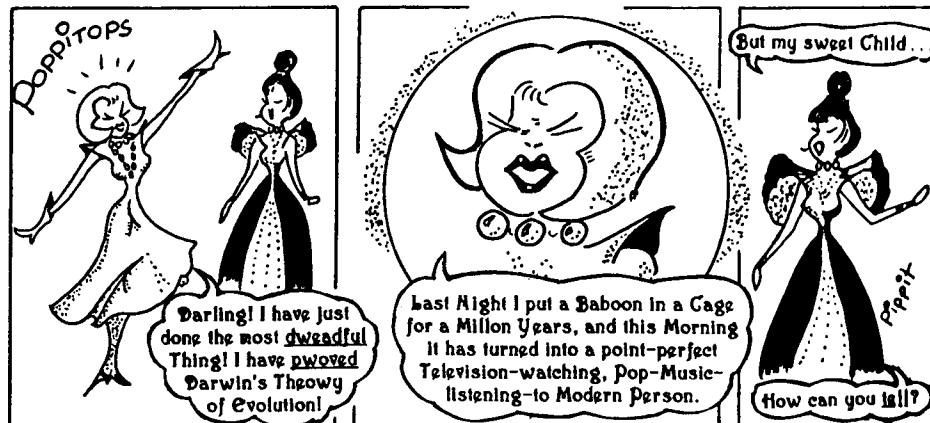
for many, many years; and yet which are sane, normal, intelligent and obvious, and are the common heritage of Western humanity, and, indeed, in many cases, of humanity as a whole.

So, to return to Mr. Worſthorne's remarks with which we opened, are we the voice of the "inegalitarian, authoritarian Right which has not been heard in Britain for centuries"? Inegalitarian, certainly, for the doctrine of "equality" is one of the central myths of the modernist aberration (and one so obviously false that we suspect the High Priests themselves do not really believe in it). Authoritarian? We do not see how any one could well be more authoritarian than the forces behind the totalitarian imposition of modernism upon the world, and most of the traditionalists we know are opposed to the degree of State control, to the incursion of police and legal powers into private and family life, to the massive systems of licensing, regulation and surveillance which are part and parcel of the modernist bureaucratic State: most of us would oppose the suppression of the free expression of opinion, such as that entailed in the Race Relations Acts, whether applied to our own opinions or to any one else's. In short, traditionalists are, in many respects, *opposed* to authoritarianism and advocate a freer society. On the other hand, many of us would not accept that massive international industries, such as the "pop" industry, should have unlimited freedom to spread corruption to the ignorant and gullible, nor that quasi-monopolistic broadcasting services should be free to pump vileness into every home in the land, or should be forcing-houses for a limited and tendentious range of opinions. The question of whether we are more or less authoritarian than our opponents is a

moot one, but we would say, on balance, less. The word, however, is used by Mr. Worſthorne in what we suspect is rather a symbolic than a literal sense. It is a question less of how we conceive the balance between authority and freedom than of which party is on the side of chaos and disintegration and which on the side of order and harmony; and unquestionably, tradition stands for order and modernism for chaos. The chaos is no less rigidly governed than the order—in fact, it must be far more rigorously policed because it is chaotic (laws and police powers are constantly increasing in all modern societies); but if order is defined as authoritarian simply because it is order and not chaos, then we embrace the word wholeheartedly.

Leaving aside questions of the exact definitions of words, in one word, yes. Yes, we are that voice of which Mr. Worſthorne speaks. We may not agree with his precise definition; we may not agree among ourselves upon a precise definition of ourselves, but every one knows what voice it is that is being spoken of, just as every one knows what is (or was) *avant garde*. We are the voice of what is warm and human, the voice of what is ancient and profound, raised at last against the clacking machine-like rationalism (and the complementary neurotic emotionalism) of the modern world. We are the voice of order against chaos, of nobility against vulgarity, of intelligence against cleverness, of beauty against banality, of depth against broadness, of quality against quantity, of lion against ape, of light against dark.

We are the voice that has been silenced for centuries; and, as the modern world begins the long, slow process of internal dissolution, we give notice that we are silent no more.



ANGELS IN BABYLON

PART 1: THE DEATH OF THE SPECTRE

In Which the Lady IMPERIA Demonstrates the Inevitable Decline of Modernism

THE SCENE: The drawing room of a house in the country. It is not what could properly be called a country house, and yet it has the air of one in some ways more than the real thing did in the late 20th or very early 21st century, when this scene is set. Certainly it offers hospitality to people who are leisured or largely leisured, or who regard themselves in the light of being leisured. It is a summer afternoon and French windows, half-open, look out upon a verandah and a well-kept lawn beyond.

Imperia sits at a baby grand piano, tinkling idly at a set of impromptu variations on a nursery tune. She is dressed in the rather stately costume of the 1880s, immaculately tailored, with high collar and bustle. She seems conscious of herself and her movements to an extent that one might be forgiven for thinking that what she is practising is not her piano-playing but her pose. The art of seeming dreamily idle with a perfectly straight back is, in itself, one of the flowers of civilisation.

Poupée enters. She is dressed immaculately in the style of the '30s of the twentieth century. Her dark hair is cut close, with little kiss-curls on her cheeks. Her face is powdered almost white and her lips are painted in a dark red Cupid's bow. Her eyebrows are drawn with the perfect curving line of a Japanese master. Both in her appearance and in her movements she resembles a porcelain doll. Nothing in her reflects the cult of spontaneity. Her life is an art which has no desire to imitate nature—or, more exactly, that impoverished caricature of human nature and human "naturalness" which dominated the 20th Century.

IMPERIA: My darling Poupée, how exquisite you look as always. I think you were not made for this tawdry world.

POUPÉE: I weally cannot remember what I had in mind when I made myself. I wather fancy that I meant to inhabit a charming world of your making.

IMPERIA: So I really must live up to my pink and white china doll! But what a fetching lisp. Is it new?

POUPÉE: Yes, quite new, and I attribute it to your Victorian influence. You see, I have come to believe that every girl should have an accomplishment, and this is mine. I practice it for three hours every day and have my maid-servant wap me sharply over the knuckles with a wuler whenever I forget. It quite consoles me for not having learned the pianoforte.

Clovis enters through the French window. He is tall and slender and has the most perfectly shaped Imperial beard and moustache. His wing-collar suggests the Victorian. He is Imperia's husband. He is followed, after a few moments, by Beau, an immaculate younger man who surveys the world through a gold monocle on a slender black ribbon.

Poupée extends her hand to Clovis, who bows deeply, kissing it.

CLOVIS: Poupée, how splendid to see you. It has been far too long.

POUPÉE: Weally, not a fortnight.

CLOVIS: Half an hour were too long without our china doll. But how delightful; I see that you have developed a lazy R.

POUPÉE: Oh, not a lazy R. Impewia calls it a lisp, which may not be technically correct, but a lazy R sounds like a beastly vulgar place full of herds of cattle and people in deplorable clothes with deplorable voices.

CLOVIS: That sounds like Regent-Street in the late twentieth century. "Lisp" it shall be from this moment forward. I could not forgive myself if I were to give you nightmares about Regent-Street.

Enter Beau, who is introduced to Poupée.

BEAU: Dear lady, I am overawed. I should no doubt attempt to pay some gallant compliment, but how can one compliment perfection?

POUPÉE: But how prescient of you to credit me with perfection. It is not true, of course, but it is my only weal ambition.

BEAU: And yet it is the one which contains all others.

POUPÉE: On the contrary, it is not an ambition at all in the usual sense, for I do not desire to do anything, merely to be perfect.

BEAU: Man does, woman is, what?

POUPÉE: So I have heard, though it always seems to me wather unfair on man. I mean, it might sound wather welaxing in theory, to be doing things all the time, but I am sure it would become dreadfully tedious after a day or two.

BEAU: I believe it does. Havin' a job they call it;—but of course, they become so lethargic they hardly notice it after a while. It seems a very vacuous and decadent life to me, but I suppose somebody has to do it.

POUPÉE: Wather like servants, I suppose.

BEAU: Yes, a bit like servants, except that servants sometimes do unweal things, like

NEW CENTURY

7

lightin' one's cigarette. And these chaps think themselves so dashed important. They think nothin' in the world has the moral elevation of makin' rubber ducks all day, or else sellin' rubber ducks all day.

CLOVIS: Well, servants do think themselves very important, don't you know. There is nobody quite as important as a head parlour-maid in her own estimation, unless it be a butler. I should think the managing director of an international company was very much like a butler. He must have a butler's soul and a butler's mind, though I doubt if he quite aspires to a butler's heart.

IMPERIA: What amuses me is the way so many of the native girls are so forceful in their demands to be a part of it all. One can understand free people, in their ignorance, hammering on the doors of the prison-house to demand admittance. It is a little harder to understand them, once inside, forming committees to press for the right to stay for ever and ever.

CLOVIS: It is the recidivist problem, my dear. A certain type, once he has been in a prison, never feels properly secure or happy outside one.

POUPÉE: I think it is twewily clever to make women think they want to do whatever some one finds it convenient that they should do. It is like Tom Sawyer getting the chaps to paint the fence and pay him for the privilege.

CLARISSA: With respect, madam, I find it difficult to admire such things. To pervert a soul from its true course must be an evil, and the love of superficial labour is the sign of an idle mind.

IMPERIA: A very uplifting sentiment, my dear, but perhaps a shade democratic. The bios theoretikon can never be possible for the majority or even for a large minority. The real problem is the inversion of the natural and necessary hierarchy. The placing of means above ends, method above wisdom, serf and burgher above nobility and clerisy. But we must return later to these things.

Clarissa has entered during the latter part of the conversation. She wears small round spectacles, her hair is pulled severely back from her face into a roll at the back. She is erect in a way

which seems rather stiff. Her crisp, lacy blouse and just-below-the-knee skirt are in an indeterminate style which could be pre- or post-war, though her real seamed stockings place her clearly before the spiritual collapse of the mid-1960s—or after the turn of the 21st century.

Her whole air is that of a governess or a librarian of the old school, yet she is really very young and behind her primness and precision lie a certain nervousness and uncertainty. She has protected herself from the modern world with a pose so daring in its completeness and in its alienness from that world that her experience of human society is small enough to leave her almost feral, while simultaneously she has surrounded herself with the nicest inhibitions of civil society carefully preserved from a time she has never known.

Until now she has cared little for the impression she has made on others—or rather has delighted in shocking them with her modesty and morality and other Bohemianisms so startling to the suburban post-respectability of the television age. She is now confronted with the novelty of finding herself in company whose opinions and persons she does not despise. This fills her with an inner self-consciousness which leads to a marked stiffening of her outward mannerisms. It is a happy outcome, for she is in company which admires all that is perfect in its kind.

She sees Poupée for the first time and regards her with a mixture of puzzlement, potential disapproval and breath-taking

admiration. They are introduced. Clarissa maintains a demeanour of icy—or perhaps of crystalline—formality.

POUPÉE: This is a vewy gweat pleasure. I hope it will not seem amiss to compliment you on your performance. You have done almost nothing, and yet have done it consummately. I know one must not applaud before the end of a piece of music; but there, I have done it. Hats off, gentlemen: a portion of genius. Blonde genius, too, which gentlemen are said to prefer and in certainly vewy striking.

IMPERIA (seeing Clarissa look somewhat nonplussed): It is a high compliment that she pays you my dear, perhaps, from her, the

highest of all. But you must never fear. There is no spirit of mockery or of unkindness in this house.

POUPÉE: Every one here is a treasure with a topping performance.

IMPERIA: Every one here is at least fundamentally sound.

BEAU: If any one turns out not to be sound, we take him out and shoot him.

POUPÉE: Oh! Not *litewally*?
BEAU: Well, perhaps not *quite* literally. Not with a bang—

CLOVIS: Not with a bang you can *hear*, at any rate.

BEAU: But it is dashed good fun. We will have to arrange a shootin' for you some day soon.

POUPÉE: I say, are not they *mystewious*? I do not think gentlemen should be allowed to be *mystewious*, do you?

CLARISSA: I think gentlemen should be allowed to shoot unsound people as much as they please. There are a great many people in the modern world who would be immeasurably improved by being shot dead.

POUPÉE: I say!
IMPERIA: There speaks the authentic voice of one who has lived in Babylon.

CLARISSA: Indeed, madam, I can think of not a single good thing which belongs to the culture of the modern world. There are a few good things left in the modern world, but they are merely vestiges of its inheritance from the past which it has not yet destroyed.

BEAU (teasingly): What about the jolly old miracles of modern science?

CLARISSA: They may be in some cases a blessing, if rarely an unmixed one. But I spoke of modern *culture*. Modern *technique* may not be inherently bad except insofar as it is allied with modern culture, and that alliance is purely accidental. There is no *necessary* connexion between technical advance and cultural collapse. The two merely happen to have gone hand in hand in this century. One can easily conceive of a civilised world with advanced technique, although the outward forms of that technique would certainly be very different.

IMPERIA: Excellent. Not every one would agree with you on the moral neutrality of modern technique, but it is a tenable position well expressed.

CLARISSA (a little challengingly): But modern *culture*, I reiterate, has no redeeming feature whatever.

POUPÉE: Except, of course, its absolute, unadulterated worthlessness. That is a sort of perfection.

CLARISSA: A mere sophistry.

POUPÉE: Well, it does *sound* like that, I admit, but it is not quite. We are the first generation born into an utterly worthless world; and it has been *tewwibly* good for us. We have been able to write it off absolutely. At their "house beautiful" in London, Oscar and Constance Wilde had all sorts of fascinating guests: Sawah Bernhardt, Bwowning, Ouida, Henwy Irving, Ellen Tewwy, Swinburne, Walter Cwane, Wuskin, Whistler, Mewedith, and lots of others. Between the wars one might have gathered a weasonable company of litew-ay and public men. Even after the war there were wemnants and a world not entirely beneath contempt. Today, any gathering of people equivalent to the Wildes' at-homes would consist entirely of people one would cwiss the woad to avoid.

CLOVIS: Yes, I recall an essayist speaking of people who claim to have no heroes and who have no desire to meet great men. He calls it a mean-spirited and a petty posture; and I agree with him entirely. So, I hope do we all. None of us would admire such self-absorbed vanity. Yet it cannot be denied that there simply are no great men worth meeting today. There are hundreds of men I would be honoured and delighted to meet, yet none of them is alive.

POUPÉE: Yes, that is it. The world has been declining for—oh, for ages. For a century at the very least. But by becoming so unwelievedly worthless, it has finally let us go. We owe it nothing. We ask it for nothing. We know it has nothing to give us.

IMPERIA: Its films, its books, its music, its television are valueless to us. They have not even the power of temptation. The men who think have no leisure. They are forced to think as slaves of modernism in order to keep their jobs at universities or as "writers". We have no respect for the words of slaves.

We are forced to build our own world; create our own leisure, or semblance of leisure; find our own servants and live in a world populated by the few. If we write books, we write with no hope of publication for the many. We write solely for the few. Our art, our talk, our philosophy are for the few. Our songs and our stories, our performances and our self-creations are for the few. No longer do we speak of fame; for fame in a corrupt and controlled world is allowed only to the creatures and the ciphers of that world; and in any case it is a world that consists of people who do not matter. Only the few now matter. There is no world, no "society", there is only us. We have been cut to the bone and thereby have been freed.

POUPÉE: Oh, bwavo! I knew I meant something like that.

IMPERIA: And you have provided us with an excellent preamble for the task in hand. For now that we are all present, I wish us to have a symposium.

POUPÉE: A *litewal* one, I hope. I have been inventing new cocktails all the way down here. Thwee of them are dwinkable and one is a work of genius, but I am not sure which is which. It is time for the empiwical method.

CLARISSA: If we are to have a symposium, then may I suggest that our hostess should begin it by enlarging upon the tantalising hint which she dropped this afternoon to the effect that the modern world is dying. We have so far been speaking of its tyrannical pervasiveness and of the fact that we can nowhere be free of its hideous grip save in our own small company. It would seem that, much though we hate it, we are compelled to admit that nothing could be stronger or more complete. One may, perhaps, predict some sudden and unexpected catastrophe or miracle which will bring it to the ground—but how can you say, as I believe you do say, that it is senile, morally exhausted and on the point of death?

IMPERIA: Thank you for putting the question so succinctly. It is, of course, true that the demise of a particular system is imminent at the very time when its worldly power is greatest. In 1912 the words "wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set" seemed to most people—British and foreign—to express the inevitable destiny of the British Empire. In 1938 it was still looked upon as one of the enduring pillars of the world. Hitler believed that the British Empire and the Roman Catholic Church were the two institutions which might outlast his Thousand Year Reich. Ten years later the dismemberment had begun and few informed men could have been in doubt as to where it must inevitably end. Yet even then no one would have dared to suggest that the Roman Catholic Church, in its ancient capacity as bastion of tradition, was already in its last full decade.

Great orders die in different ways. Sometimes a wholly healthy order is destroyed by the overwhelming force of some external power. So it was with the red nations of North America; but this is rare. Sometimes an order succumbs to its own internal decay. So it was with the order of mediæval Europe. Sometimes that process of decay is assisted by external forces—as was the case with the fall of the Roman Empire. Sometimes external forces exacerbate a decay which, left to itself, might

not have become fatal for many decades, or might even have righted itself. So it was with the fall of the British Empire. But in every case except the first—that in which the external force is so overwhelming that even the healthiest system has no hope of withstanding it; and this, as I say, is rare—in all other cases, the collapse of the system is predictable from the internal state of the system. One can either say that the collapse must happen or that it must happen failing a restitution which may be more or less unlikely according to the circumstances.

The most fundamental form of decay is philosophical decay. This precedes all other decay. The sense of inevitable triumph or of inevitable decline which surrounds a system has its roots in philosophy. If a nation or a civilisation has adopted a philosophy which—all unknown to itself—ultimately entails the destruction of all it holds dear, then sooner or later those things will be destroyed. If it has disproved or forgotten or ceased to understand the philosophy upon which its own existence is grounded, then its fate is sealed. If, on the other hand, the philosophy adopted by a nation leads logically to the triumph of a particular idea or a particular system, then that idea or system will sweep all before it when that particular unfolding of the philosophy comes about. That is the truth of the old saying that "nothing is so powerful as an idea whose time has come". This has nothing to do with any Inevitable Progress. The idea in question may be a perfectly false one. It may be entirely pernicious. But if its time has come, it will triumph—for a time.

The purest example of such an idea in our time—and long before our time—is the idea of Socialism. In 1848, Marx wrote: "A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Socialism"; and he was right. The inevitability, the rightness, the ultimate incontestability of Socialist ideas was already woven into the fabric of the thought of the time, even though it would not come to full fruition until the next century. Within two decades of this utterance, Britain had become a full one-man-one-vote democracy, recognising the absolute sovereignty of the People and the principle, if not the practice, of total equality.

Every one will, I am sure, recall the inevitability of Socialism. In the 1960s, Conservative ministers were in no doubt that Britain must be a Socialist State. Their only concern was to see it inaugurated in as orderly, and painless, and, in the case of the "right-wingers", slow, a manner as possible. I recall C.S. Lewis, who regarded the Socialist total

welfare state with great distaste, saying that he could, regrettably, see no other way in which the affairs of an advanced, modern, industrial nation could be conducted.—And neither, despite occasional spurts of empty rhetoric from the “right”, could any one else.

BEAU: I remember attendin’ a lecture given by an exiled Tibetan lama at Oxford in the 1970s. He was asked whether the young Tibetans living in exile from Chinese Communism were keepin’ up the old traditions. “No,” he said, “they are all Socialists.” No one was surprised.

IMPERIA: Exactly. All intelligent young people the world over were Socialists; even those living in exile from a Socialist régime.

In America, of course, the *name* Socialism never became respectable, but the *thing* was no less dominant from the time of the New Deal onwards. Americans used the term “liberal” to describe what every one else called a Socialist, but the creed was identical—welfare, state control, enforced equality, levelling taxation and so forth. And just as in Europe, those politicians who did not wear the “liberal” label were only pursuing the same policies at a slightly reduced rate, and certainly would not have dreamed of reversing the least one of them.

The only forces to have posed a serious challenge to the democratic system in this century have been Bolshevism and Fascism, and both of these were thoroughly Socialistic. Indeed, this goes back a long way. In the 1850s, when George Fitzhugh, the most eloquent defender of the Old South, wished to produce an apologia for the system of slavery, he borrowed his arguments from the European Socialist writers of the time (not as strange as it seems, since a slave estate is a very similar system to a Socialist state—especially from the point of view of the slaves). If any one, of whatever persuasion, wished to attack bourgeois capitalism, only Socialism provided him with the moral armoury to do so. Hence the dabbings in Socialism of men as essentially ingratian and fundamentally un-Socialist as Ruskin, Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw, and William Morris.

Carlyle, as Ralph Waldo Emerson said of him in 1843, held that “a new chivalry and nobility, namely the dynasty of labour, is replacing the old nobilities.” No man could be less egalitarian than Carlyle, but if a thinking man should look for the destruction of the all-pervasive bourgeois liberalism of the time, he could look in no other direction. Let us be clear, then, that the idol which fell so suddenly in

the 1980s was not merely an intellectual fad of the 1930s, but a stream of thought and practice which had dominated the mind of the Western world, with ever-increasing rigour, for a century and a half.—And which was itself but the logical and inevitable successor of what had gone before it.

The thinking of a culture—particularly of an essentially unintelligent culture such as that of the modern world—is notoriously vague; but a large number of the ideologies and social movements of the latter half of the twentieth century, were, in a rather woolly but entirely necessary way, predicated upon the assumption of the ultimate and benevolent triumph of Total Socialism. What was vulgarly called “the Permissive Society”, for example, had underlying it the unstated assurance that it did not really matter if one destroyed the foundations of the family, because the State would look after the children and every one else in any case—and besides, it was really *better* that the State should take over the job from such primitive, inefficient structures as the wicked “nuclear family”. Stated baldly, it sounds rather silly, and not many people did state it quite so baldly; but these were the vague assumptions and half-assumptions which dominated the thinking of the time.

If Socialism went only as deep as this, its demise would herald a considerable psychological upheaval in the modern consciousness; shaking many of the underlying social assumptions of a generation; but in fact, as I propose to show, it went very much deeper.

In order to pursue this theme, it is important to recall the way Socialism was seen in the past. It takes a little effort of imagination even now, for already it is passing into folklore as a sort of *passé* superstition of our fathers. In the 1930s, when Miss Greta Garbo made the film *Ninotchka*, she played a beautiful young Soviet commissar. She was utterly cold, utterly logical: a human reasoning machine. She typified Socialism as it was seen and as it saw itself. Efficient, practical, eminently rational. It was, in short, the application of “science” and “planning” to the human condition. That was what it was; that was its brief; on that it stood or fell. If it had a fault, it might be coldness, over-rationality, lack of human emotion. This is a little hard to remember, now that Socialism is seen as a clumsy, inefficient system whose saving graces are likely to lie in the area of sentimentality and warm-heartedness. There is a curious irony in the famous words of the Western intellectual returning from a trip to the

Soviet Union: “I have seen the future—and it works!” Today no two things are surer about Socialism than that it does not work and that it has no future.

Nonetheless, it is of the first importance that we should remember what Socialism was in its heyday, not so very long ago. Why was it so obvious to all—whether they liked it or not—that its triumph was inevitable? What was this idea, and why had its time so overwhelmingly come?

Socialism was nothing less than the summation and logical fulfilment of the ideology which has dominated Europe since what is called the “Enlightenment” of the 18th century. Socialism was the pure, unadulterated practice of rationalism. The rationalist philosophy of the “Enlightenment”, which underlies all the social changes of the last three hundred years, states that reason is the measure of all things. Everything which comes down to us merely from tradition must be subjected to rational analysis and if it cannot be proven according to the canons of rationalism (which, while presented as natural and unarguable, are in fact rather arbitrary—but that is a subject for another day) dismissed as a superstition. Thus was the Divine Right of Kings (by that time but a pale reflection of the traditional doctrine of Kingship) rejected and thus—though the original rationalists did not go so far—could all hierarchical order, right down to that of the family itself, be rejected. That is why *equality* and *planning* are the two cornerstones of Socialism.

CLARISSA: But surely you are not opposed to reason?

IMPERIA: Very far from it. We are opposed to rationalism, which is an entirely different thing. Rationalism is the dogmatic extension of reason beyond its proper domain; an extension which has no basis in reason and is therefore, in itself, irrational. We are the champions of reason against both rationalism and its equal-and-opposite twin sister, irrationalism; both of which are characteristic of the modern world. We may expand upon this later if you wish, but for the present I must pursue my theme.

Given the central position accorded to reason by the post-“Enlightenment” ideology of the Western world, it must follow that a *planned economy*, that is, an economy directed by conscious human reason, must be better, more efficient and more productive than one merely allowed to grow at haphazard with no rational control or direction. This was the next step in the argument that had led from the traditional aristocratic order to capitalism

itself: to this extent, Marx’s “dialectic of history” was a reality—though to impose the dialectic of a century or two of Western aberration upon the whole sweep of world-history was a typically 19th-century piece of bourgeois cultural provincialism. Nonetheless, as far as that more limited dialectic of recent Western history goes, Marx was correct. Socialism was its only possible next step. The centrally planned economy is the apotheosis of the rationalist project. Without it, the “Enlightenment” ideology of the West remained unconsummated. A spectre—or perhaps an incubus—was haunting Europe.

The failure of Socialism—or rather, the *general recognition* of that failure, for Socialism had failed long ago—marks a crisis in the history of Western ideology far greater than the modern world seems capable of realising; perhaps one had rather say, so great that the modern world *dare* not realise it all at once.

At the end of the last century, Nietzsche perceived the enormity of the cultural crisis that was being created in the Western world by what he called “the death of God”: he was astonished that his contemporaries could not see the upheaval that was taking place about them and within them, and used the most forceful poetic language in order to try to stir the 19th century consciousness into a recognition of what it had done. Clovis, my dear one, could you pass me that Nietzsche? Thank you. Yes, here is a representative passage:

Where has God gone? . . . I shall tell you. We have killed him—you and I. We are all his murderers. But how have we done this? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What did we do when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not perpetually falling? Backward, forward, side-ward, in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is more and more night not coming on all the time? Must not lanterns be lit in the morning?

On many occasions Nietzsche returned to this theme—the great cultural earthquake which his contemporaries seemed so blandly unable to see. And he was right, of course. All the strange, unnatural events of the 20th century—its genocidal wars, its unprecedented massacres, the collapse of morality and family life, the psychotic art and faceless, brutalist architecture—were all results or expressions of the “death of God”. This passage, from the same book, might be the epigraph placed be-

fore the 20th century:

The total nature of the world is . . . to all eternity chaos, not in the sense that necessity is lacking, but in that order, structure, form, beauty, wisdom and whatever other human æsthetic notions we may have are lacking. . . Let us beware of attributing to it heartlessness and unreason or their opposites: it is neither perfect nor beautiful nor noble, and has no desire to become any of these. . . neither does it know any laws. Let us beware of saying there are laws in nature. There are only necessities: there is no one to command, no one to obey, no one to transgress. . . Let us beware of saying that death is the opposite of life. The living being is only a species of the dead, and a very rare species.

Is this not the spirit which breathes through the 20th century, and especially the late 20th century? Faceless chaos, brute necessity, presumptuous hysteria on the edge of nothingness. Is it not this bleak vision of the "true nature" of the world which lies behind the morbidly pessimistic and banal usage of the words "reality" and "realism" in current English? Is it not this soul-killing falsehood which is expressed in the concrete tower-block, the modern telephone kiosk or the sub-human inconsequentiality of denim nethergarments?

All this was latent in "the death of God"; which was itself but the tipping of a balance in the psychology of the age. Of course there would still be believers after this "death" just as there were atheists before it; and perhaps the numbers of each were not even significantly altered;—but at some time during the latter half of the 19th century, the religious principle ceased to be a significant factor in cultural life; it ceased to operate to any large extent beyond the bounds of the individual. "The death of God" was essentially a social and cultural phenomenon. One so subtle as to go unperceived by the many, but one far more profound in its effects than any half-dozen wars or revolutions.

What I wish to explain; what I have been leading up to, is this: the death of Socialism is an upheaval of similar proportions to the "death of God". The logical consummation of the entire rationalist movement lay in Socialism. If rationalism had been correct, then the rationally planned economy must have been superior to the haphazard, unplanned, organic economy. If Socialism is found to be hollow, then the rationalist stream of thought has been subjected to the most devastating of logical refutations: the *reductio ad absurdum*. It has been carefully drawn out to its logical conclusion—not in argument, but in actual

historical practice—and that conclusion has been shown to be absurd;—or rather, what is worse than absurd to the pragmatic rationalist: unworkable, inefficient, impractical. If it had been a different system of ideas, that might not have mattered so greatly. One might have said "It may be impractical, but it is still right." But that is just what modern utilitarian rationalism can never say. It knows no right or wrong; it knows no truth or falsehood. What is right is what works; what is wrong is what fails to work: this is the principle not only of modern business and politics, but of modern science. The rationalist project has been refuted in its own terms and on its own conditions, within a world controlled exclusively by itself.

Towards the end of the 1980s there appeared a book entitled *The Fatal Conceit*, written by a philosopher named Friedrich Hayek, which epitomised the death of Socialism. The book speaks of the extraordinary complexity of the thing called the "world market"—of how one man's going to work to make a small part of some piece of machinery is exchanged for the most remarkable array of things—rubber from the Indies, woods from the tropics, foodstuffs from every part of the world, all organised, where necessary, into far greater and complex wholes, all brought to within a mile of the man's dwelling; and the same process, consisting of literally uncountable numbers of transactions, is bringing similarly complex arrays of commodities to every other man within the unfathomably intricate system. The author points out that no committee—no thousand committees, working day and night—could conceivably organise this process. It can only take place naturally and organically. Where Socialist economies have tried to plan and direct, they have still been wholly dependent upon the natural market; their only effect upon it, insofar as they were successfully Socialist, was to inhibit it and reduce its efficiency; there was no question, as they at first supposed, of their being able to replace it, any more than an artificial tree could reproduce the functions of a real one.

Now, there was nothing particularly remarkable about this thesis. It had been put forward before. What was remarkable was that a thesis which, earlier in the century, would have been condemned by most forward-thinking people as reactionary propaganda and old wives' tales about "human nature", by the late 1980s was accepted by virtually every one as self-evidently true: as something which must be accepted whether one liked it or not—much as the inevitability

of Socialism itself had been accepted a decade or so earlier. Exactly why this acceptance forced itself upon the world when it did, I cannot pretend to know. Little had actually changed. Socialism was no more obviously false than it had been for half a century before. It was one of those ground-shifts which takes place within the psychic life of a civilisation at certain points in its development—rather as the "death of God" had done a century earlier.

POUPÉE: I should have said that one need hardly look for a cause of the death of Socialism. What is remarkable is not that it died, but that it lived for so long.

BEAU: Well, it didn't, really, did it? I mean, it was rather like a king who had died, but whose ministers continued to pretend that he was alive and to rule in his name—or like a crumbling buildin' which had almost entirely disintegrated, but whose owners kept repainting and shoring up the façade. It really proves your point, Imperia. The psychological need for the thing was so great that the corpse was wheeled about for years after it had manifestly failed.

CLARISSA: No doubt that is why when it did crumble, it crumbled so suddenly and completely.

IMPERIA: One should not, perhaps, lay too much stress upon the completeness of the process. I should not be at all surprised to see one or more Socialist revivals—perhaps quite successful ones—that would be entirely characteristic of the death-throes of a movement of such magnitude; and the Socialist spirit will long remain well entrenched in many places of power and influence—but certainly the *mystique* is gone and can never return. Socialism can never again be Fate. It can only be one idea among others; and one that has seen better days.

But let us return to Dr. Hayek. Being a somewhat complacent liberal philosopher, he seems wholly unaware of the far-reaching implications of his thesis. He sees it as merely a vindication of liberal capitalism: but it is something far profounder than that—and, indeed, ultimately, it is the very reverse of that—it is the refutation of the rule of reason. It is the recognition that conscious planning does not work on the great human scale: that the organic, the natural, the apparently haphazard, is, in practice, superior to the planned, the rationally ordered and the consciously controlled. It gives the lie to the New Society and to the Promethean attempts to re-mould everything in the light of plans, theories and notions which have been the driving-force of the entire post-"Enlightenment" view of life.

The idea that the unplanned can work better than the planned; that that which has "just grown" in accordance with the undirected processes of "muddling along" can be superior—immeasurably superior—to the results of rational organisation and planning, while it has long been a truism of common sense, is a truly soul-shaking admission for the Western psyche to have to take into its explicit philosophy. The modern world—capitalism no less than Socialism—is founded upon the "critical approach": the dictum that all traditional practices and institutions (those, that is, which have—or appear to the modern mind to have—"just grown") must be subject to "rational criticism" (that is, must be measured against the latest theories) and discarded or modified according to whether they are found wholly or partly wanting. This is the very cornerstone of the whole Whiggish, rationalistic, utilitarian world we inhabit; it is the first premiss, the *sine qua non* of the modernist universe. That there should be something beyond reason, inaccessible to reason, too complex for reason, is a nightmare admission which undermines the very foundations of the modern world. Of course, we are speaking here of a very inferior "something"—something which is actually too bitty and diffuse for reason rather than anything which transcends reason—we are far, very far, from wishing to make a god of the free market—but nonetheless, this explicit recognition of the limitation of rationalism is a fatal flaw in the integrity of the modernist *Weltanschauung*. Furthermore, the fact that the thing which outreaches reason, while not actually traditional is something which is closely akin to the limited conception of tradition which the modern mind possesses—that is, something formed over time out of the undirected impulses of the folk or, as a Marxist might have it, out of the "processes of exploitation"—is a staggering psychological blow to the supercilious anti-traditionalism of text-book modernism.

We have compared the Death of Socialism with the "death of God"; and yet in a very important sense, this comparison actually understates the importance of the death of Socialism.—For the "death of God" was a logical step in the mental course of rationalism. It might be likened to the crossing of a chasm or a mountain range in the pursuit of one's ordained journey. The death of Socialism can be compared to the meeting of an impassable barrier—or, better, to finding the path one had been travelling these many years peter out, as one arrives at the promised destination and

finds that there is nothing there and that the journey has been in vain.

The death of Socialism is not simply a political event—any more than the “death of God” was simply a religious event. It is a cultural event which saturates the whole fabric of the Western world. It happens to be expressed at first in political terms because of the excessively political orientation of Western civilisation. It is no coincidence, however, that the decade which saw the death of Socialism was the same decade which saw the rise of the term “post-modernism”, nor that this was the decade when modernist architecture first came under significant attack and experiments in non-modernist architecture began to be made. Architecture is often the bell-wether of cultural shifts. The romantic movement, for example, was first expressed in architectural experiments of the mid-18th century.

The assault on modernist architecture is, once again, a movement of which the significance is all too easily underrated. Consider for a moment. Those glass-and-concrete slabs were probably one of the most hated aspects of modernism. After Prince Charles made one of his speeches against them, a popular newspaper (a leftward-leaning one) conducted an opinion poll which shewed only three per centum of respondents favourable to the architecture which had been foisted upon the world for over a generation. We have no doubt that a similar poll would have shewn similar results at any time since the War. It has always been difficult to find any one other than a few twittering middle-class petty-intellectuals who would say a word in favour of modernist architecture. And yet virtually every public or semi-public building erected over nearly half a century was made according to the modernist pattern. Why was this? Many mediate and contingent reasons might be cited; but the ultimate reason was that patrons—bluff English businessmen, local councils of every political stripe, school boards, art gallery directors, educated people of every sort—were intimidated into accepting what, in most cases, they did not like because they were convinced that (like Socialism), it represented the Future. The square block; the smoked glass; the hideous affectation of pure utility; the studied elimination of all that might be termed qualitative; the clinical exaltation of all that might be termed quantitative: through these things spoke the voice of pure rationalism, and in their gloom-laden aspect boomed the terrible threat “you can’t stand in the way of Progress.”

Those towering megaliths were not mere pieces of brittle-minded ugliness; they were the idols of modernism; the temples of its pride and its power. In their Babylonish gargantuanism lay the expression of the all-embracing, world-conquering claims of modernism; and in their ugliness and stupidity was haunted the bottomless banality of its soul. Banality, however, was not the word they used for it. They called it Realism and Efficiency; they called it the Spirit of the Age, and so it was. And the masses bowed down before them, not in love, but in abject resignation and powerlessness: for one could not stand in the way of Progress.

Let it not be supposed that the forms of those buildings were in any way accidental or the products of mere undirected stupidity. They were precisely calculated to express a certain way of thought and sensibility. The most striking thing about them—and intentionally so—was their absolute lack of the remotest connexion with any traditional idiom. They have not evolved, as other architectural styles have, out of the architectural tradition from which they sprung. They are a “clean break”: a Promethean attempt to re-construct the built world from abstract principles. In this they are a precise analogy to other forms of modernism, notably the political forms. The way in which any backward-looking predilection for traditional form was immediately vilified by the architectural establishment as “reactionary”, or even as “Fascist” or “Nazi”, underlines this point admirably. The extraordinary alienness and utter lack of human warmth or friendliness exuded by such buildings is a by-product of this perverse rejection of tradition. The second feature of these buildings is their lack of any decorative element; or as their exponents term it, their “functionalism”—which is to say, the affectation of pure utilitarianism in the sphere of form. Again, this is simply the expression of the rationalist, utilitarian nature of modernism—Ninotchka in concrete, one might say,—only stripped of the accidental beauty of body and warmth of personality which Ninotchka herself was unable to extirpate. Nobility, again, one of the most constant qualities of great buildings of every sort, from the earliest civilisations to the 19th century, has been rigorously purged. It is a consciously democratic and proletarian style of architecture, and as such, is heartily loathed by the proletariat, who do not cease to hanker after nobility and a world which they can respect. In short, everything that has been comprised in the concept of “progress” from

the time of the Whig ascendancy onwards is expressed in pure and concentrated form in modern architecture. If you would look upon the face of modernism naked and unashamed—divested of all inconsistencies and of all sentimental or hypocritical concessions to tradition—then look at the Post Office Tower or at Centre Point.

The revolt against modernist architecture is, at heart, a revolt against all that it stood for. It is the sign of a *psyche* liberated from its hypnotic claims. Those megaliths are no longer the embodiment of the inevitable, ineluctable Future, endowed with all the authority of rationalist absolutism; no longer are they the unanswerable voice of What Must Be, the right arm of History and the chastening sword of inescapable Progress. They have been stripped of the royal, or dictatorial, robes of the *Zeitgeist* and have reverted to their ordinary, unadorned reality—ugly, unintelligent blocks of concrete erected by vulgar, time-serving Philistines. This is not at all a minor or an unimportant matter; it is the breaking of a spell—a sign that the sorcerer is weakening and that the long winter of modernism is beginning to thaw. Like the death of Socialism itself, of which it is a result—or rather, I would say, is another symptom of the same cultural shift, which lies deeper than either—it may be seen in either of two ways; and both are true at the same time. In one way, they can be seen as nothing more than common sense—the triumph of the obvious. Seen in that light, they are perfectly unremarkable. At the same time, it should be remembered that precisely because these things were absurd and ugly—precisely because the great economic system of Socialism was an economic failure and the new architecture was an architectural failure which, rather than appealing to the people, froze and alienated them as nothing had before—precisely because of those facts, a great force was required to hold the modernist forms in place for decades as unassailable powers. In this force we see not a conspiracy in the usual sense (although some of the contingent means employed might be viewed in that light) but ultimately the psychological need of a culture to continue to believe in the logical conclusions of the theories upon which it is based. Too much was at stake to admit failure, and the intellectual world of modernism had become like an old scientist who must increasingly “explain away”, or ignore altogether, the results of his experiments, that he shall not be forced to give up the cherished theories of a

lifetime. The relinquishing of this tenacious hold upon the more untenable aspects of modernism is not merely a “lightening of the load”; a far more accurate metaphor is that certain threads have been pulled out that are essential to the integrity of the fabric.

CLARISSA: Yes, the collapse of the modern ideology in its fullest form seems undoubtedly true.—And yet, if you will forgive my questioning you, is this really a sign of any new dawn? You say that romantic spirits of the 19th century were forced to take refuge in Socialism as the only counter to bourgeois liberalism—the only one possible because it was the next step upon the downward path, and therefore had a timeliness, an historical force, which any more traditional remedy had lacked. Do I interpret you correctly?

IMPERIA: Quite correctly.

CLARISSA: But if this is so, and I am sure it is, where does that leave us? Do we not return to the world of Adam Smith, of Bentham and of dark, satanic Mill? Do we not return to clattering, bourgeois liberalism more triumphant than ever, because wholly unopposed? Is this not exactly what we see about us now? And in architecture, do we see any signs of a true resurgence, or do we see a trivial, giggly, post-modern collage, or at best a barren reconstruction of neo-classical forms, which, in their time, while not lacking nobility, were the epitome of the rationalist spirit and now are but cheap copies of copies? In a word, madam, I find your thesis incontestable but can see in it no real grounds for hope.

IMPERIA: Which is but a polite way of saying that you do not contest the facts upon which my thesis is founded, but cannot accept the thesis itself; for my thesis is that modernism—however long it may continue, and it may continue in one form or another for a long time—has contracted a fatal disease and that its history, henceforward, is the story of its more or less gradual death. Thus I cannot but conclude that there are, from the traditionalist point of view, the strongest grounds for hope. Certainly the hope is not an immediate one, but nonetheless, it is hope; a hope—I would say a virtual certainty—that the future will move us toward rather than away from tradition. The movement will be slow; it will be interrupted by lurches in the opposite direction (every historical movement, including modernism itself, is interrupted by lurches in the opposite direction), but it will take place. History is on our side: and that is something which no traditionalist has rightly been able to say for many lifetimes.

Perhaps this may seem over-optimistic, yet I do not believe it is so. We are not given to undue optimism. For most of our lives we had resigned ourselves to the fact that no change except change for the worse was possible. If occasionally the busy-minded followers of the News were inclined to see signs of hope in the fleeting events of the day, we had no such inclination. We have never cared but for the long view and the great movements of history—not merely from an Olympian *apatheia* or an habitual detachment from bustle, but because, for a traditionalist in these days, only a change of the profoundest kind could hold the smallest interest. Nor had we any interest in persuading ourselves that such a change was imminent when there were no cogent reasons to compel such a belief. We had turned from the modern world and its clatter of information and misinformation so completely that the late changes went for some years unnoticed by us. When we heard of them we viewed them with suspicion, but upon examination it became clear that a ground-shift really was under way, a ground-shift which far from being exaggerated in importance by the modern chatters, (as is usually the case with the fleeting events of the "News") was, in fact, something the magnitude of which they were scarcely able to suspect. Subsequent events have continued to confirm this more quickly and dramatically than one might have hoped for; the entire thesis that I am expounding today was, for example, complete long before the collapse of Bolshevism in eastern Europe seemed remotely possible.

CLARISSA: Yet there again, what do we see except the triumph of Coca-Cola—the uninterrupted development of bourgeois capitalism no longer opposed by its cousin-enemy Socialism?

IMPERIA: You are right, my child, as far as you go. Certainly a return to the bourgeois liberal *status quo ante* is precisely what we see now. Some optimistic souls even hope for a return, along with the return of Victorian economics of some of the more traditional aspects of the Victorian age—good manners, social deference, dignity, decency. They are quite wrong, of course. What was traditional in the Victorian era was not there *because* of its adherence to free market economics, but *in spite* of it. The traditional elements were the patrimony of previous ages—the things that had not yet been destroyed by liberal capitalism; and if the Victorian era was, in some paradoxical respects, more traditional in spirit than the age which had preceded it, that was

partly owing to a great religious revival, and partly to a reaction—largely sentimental, but nonetheless sincere—against the anti-traditional changes which were gathering pace and crushing all before them. We see, then, no connexion between capitalism and traditional values except for an opposite and reactive one.

A friend of yours and mine has said that all the positive changes of the 1980s were negative. That is quite correct. Using the term "positive" in the rather loose American sense of "good" or "beneficial", it is true to say that all the changes of this nature were (in the more proper sense) negative—that is, not changes *toward* the good, but merely changes *away* from the evil. We do not look for any positive good in present developments. Our own dear Poupée once compared Mrs. Thatcher to the great fire of London—she did not construct anything of value, but at least she destroyed the plague. And taking Mrs. Thatcher as the type of the movement from Socialism, that is entirely true. The great fire of London also cleared the ground for Sir Christopher Wren; but we have not arrived at that stage just yet.

To put the matter briefly: you do not see any positive good thing in the developments of the present. In that, we are at one. None of the developments of which I have been speaking are good *in themselves*; they are only good in what—despite themselves—they must lead to.

Let us return to the collapse of Socialism, and let me state the matter at its least and simplest. We do not need to suppose that Socialism will collapse completely; it may well revive itself—at least for a time—to an extent which might seem surprising at present. What has collapsed, quite irrevocably, is the inevitability of Socialism, which was believed universally until a very short time ago. This is the god that has died; the spectre that has been exorcised; this was the ghost in the machine of the modern world. Do you not see that the modern world has lost its *teleology*? It is no longer going anywhere. For centuries it has marched onward: Step after logical Step; from patrician Whiggery to capitalism, from capitalism to Socialism; the progressive lowering of the franchise; the "death of God". It all made sense. Every Step followed from the last. As each progressive movement was exhausted another, yet more progressive, was waiting in the wings, ready to continue the movement further in the same direction. That is why Socialism seemed inevitable—was inevitable. Every one knew that seriously to oppose Socialism would be to stop the train of history, and that to question that journey was to

question his own position, which lay only a station or two behind. Well, the train has stopped now. All of a sudden the modern world—which is based entirely upon the concepts of progress and evolution—finds itself going nowhere. It may shunt back to liberal capitalism; it may re-invoke the old spells of Socialism (but they can never again have the old magic); but no longer is there a dynamic, forward-thrusting movement, no longer a next stage to be reached. The journey of Progress is over and the modern world wanders about wondering what to do next.

CLARISSA: But—if you will forgive my playing Devil's Advocate—is there any real need for progress? Cannot a civilisation continue in a steady state without having to believe that it is "going somewhere"? Is not your present thesis based upon what you yourself have termed "vulgar dynamism"?

IMPERIA: I do not at all mind your playing Devil's Advocate: it is important that we should discuss the thing properly. And once again, you are right—as far as you go. It is dynamism, and it is vulgar, for a society to need to believe that it is progressing, or "going somewhere".—But that is the belief upon which the modern world is predicated. Another type of culture could live perfectly well without believing that it is progressing in a straight line; most cultures have held no such belief; but the modern world cannot cease to believe that without ceasing to be the modern world. Other cultures have had other beliefs: spiritual beliefs, mythologies. Progress is the myth of the modern world. C. S. Lewis wrote a splendid essay entitled "The Funeral of a Great Myth", in which he showed how the Myth of Progress has all the features of the

classic mythic structure. It is very convincing; but one does not need to have read that in order to know that the Myth of Progress is the underlying belief of the modern world: its justification; its purpose; its explanation for everything from the Origin of Species onwards; its pseudo-religion and its reason for being.

To answer your question directly: yes, it is entirely possible for a culture to live without dynamism, but not for modern liberal culture; not without ceasing to be itself; not, specifically, without ceasing to be anti-traditional.

But in any case, there is something more to the matter than this: for although change and evolution are not part of the *ideology* of every culture, they are nonetheless always present and necessary. I do not mean, of course, as the modernist does, to give primacy to the processes of flux and unfolding or to explain all things in terms of them; but there are in any thing—including any culture—two elements. The first is its unchanging essence and the second is the changing expression of that essence in time. The mediæval period, for example, was not governed by a dynamist ideology, but still it underwent changes and evolutions—from the remnants of the Empire to the flowering of the Feudal system; from the Romanesque to the Gothic. Some ancient cultures have unfolded much more slowly than our Western ones, which is perhaps one reason why the dynamist heresy grew up in the West: but all have their unfolding, and it is no more dynamist or evolutionist in itself to say that every culture has its unfolding than to say that every flower has its unfolding. Indeed, ultimately, it is to say the same thing. This being so, we may say that even if modernism had



THE CAPITALIST REVOLUTION

MR. ANTHONY COONEY REFLECTS UPON THE DEMOCRATIC STYLE

IN 1820 the Duke of Wellington, the hero of Waterloo and the best known man in Europe, set out for a pleasant evening in his club, wearing the new jacket and trousers his tailor had delivered. He was refused admission. By 1834 only the older squires stuck stubbornly to the breeches and hose of their youth. Significantly, it is in those pursuits, equitation and shooting, all but inseparable from the land and those whose culture and wealth are derived from it, that breeches have remained as a petrifact.

In 1851 the Prince Consort and all the royal princes, wearing trousers, tails and top hats, attended the Great Exhibition, the first cathedral of industrial capitalism, to sprinkle incense to the Genius of the Machine. The working clothes of the busy capitalist, trousers designed for speed of dressing so that no minute of the day might be lost to the pursuit of gain; coat skirts buttoned back as tails so not to impede haste in pursuit of debtors or flight from creditors, had become the formal dress of the New Order which had overthrown, in all but the appearances of pomp, the *ancien régime*. It has remained so not only in Britain where it originated, but throughout the civilised world, for the Capitalist Revolution was international and in the view of its chief pro-

phets, Cobden and Bright, internationalist. In the regiments of the line, too, there was a transformation. Not only had trousers replaced breeches, but the tri-corn hat had been replaced by the cap. If the *ancien régime* had dressed its soldiers as gentlemen, the New Régime dressed them as workers. The Revolution was complete.

All metaphysical change engenders physical change, and the petrification of daily dress as the formal attire of a new *élite* is a manifestation of that phenomenon. Hence, the vestments of the Catholic priest were, until 1965, the daily attire of a Roman gentleman of the 5th Century, the century which saw the triumph of Christianity over the ancient world. His formal attire was the toga. The vestments were changed in 1965 when, after a centuries-long rearguard action, the Church conceded the claim of the Revolution to have established a world secular order. In the same way the vestments of the Lutheran and Calvinist past or are a modified version of the academic dress of the 16th Century German universities.

Throughout Communist eastern Europe in the cafés and cabarets were to be seen men wearing soft leather, silk-lined jackets. Such attire was *de rigueur* evening dress for the Communist apparatchik. Though carefully tailored

—not been inherently dynamist, the reaching of a point at which its logical unfolding was checked would still have been a profound, and perhaps fatal, crisis.

As to whether the crisis is fatal, there may still be some doubt, but the surest sign, to my mind, is the lack of any natural next step. Before, whenever the current phase of modernism has weakened, the next phase has been waiting in the wings—dynamic, vociferous, forceful, impatient: hardly able to wait to thrust aside the old régime and institute its own age of glory; never doubting for a moment that it was wholly right and that history was on its side. Protestantism was like that; Parliamentarianism and Whiggism were like that; liberalism and capitalism were like that; democracy was like that; Socialism was like that. Nor did these things spring fully armed into being to assume the mantle of authority in the hour of their birth. Bourgeois capitalism had been developing and gaining strength for two centuries and more before it finally thrust aside the nobility. Socialism, as we have seen, was known by many to be the Coming Thing from the first half of the 19th century.—But

where now is the new movement? Where are the ardent young men and the patient old men who *know* that the Hour has come at last? Where is the next step in modernism now that Socialism has failed? What new ideology has been building its strength and gathering its adherents throughout the 20th century, ready to take over when the Crisis of Socialism came? The answer is strikingly obvious. There is none.

It is not impossible that some new variant of modernism will spring up over the next few years to strut and fret its hour upon the stage. What is impossible is that it will really be the next step, or that any one will, at heart, believe that it is the next step, in the way that every one, like it or not, knew that Socialism was the next step. For if there were a next step, we should have seen it long before now. Modernism, to return to our railway analogy, has reached the end of the line. We do not expect the train to empty all at once. We may expect much banging of doors and movement up and down the carriages; much blowing of whistles and ordering-about by railway officials. But the train will never run again.

NEW CENTURY

19

it has its origin in the black leather coat of the Berlin workers of the abortive 1919 revolution.

Mr. Michael Foot aroused indignation when he appeared at the Cenotaph, during his short-lived term as Leader of the Opposition, in a blue anorak. Significance is added, rather than subtracted, by his protestation that it was new: bought for the occasion. The significance only became apparent, however, during the miners' strike of 1984, when one saw photographs of Mr. Arthur Scargill and his henchmen arriving at and departing from formal consultations attired in anoraks. Although no doubt an unconscious choice on Mr. Foot's part, the anorak from being the work-a-day attire of the busy trade union official had already become petrified as the formal dress of the Fourth International.

The transformation of commonplace things into the badges and symbols of the victors of revolution is but a particular manifestation of a general phenomenon, that a culture engenders a common motif in all its expressions; that each cultural expression mirrors and echoes the others. An example is close at hand. The ugly bungalow growths of 1930s' ribbon development, with their bulging bay windows and semi-ovoid dormers, find an echo in the bulging waistcoats and ridiculous bowlers of Stanley Baldwin and his like. We need scarcely mention the vulgarity of the dance, jazz and what C.H. Douglas called the "Filthy crooning of Bowery melodies" of that low and dishonest decade.

The mirroring effect runs through dress, architecture, music, politics and war. The victory of Gothic over Romanesque in the 12th Century signalled the movement of the axis of power from the Mediterranean to the Baltic-North Sea Littoral. As Gothic evolved from the Lancet into the Decorated and Curvilinear, so too dress became more elaborate. Women's head-dresses grew higher until they became the steeped *hennin*. Men's hats grew taller, sleeves were slashed with colours of stained glass and the shoes of both sexes grew longer until they ended in the upturned points beloved of the illustrators of fairy tales. When the Gothic arch flattened out into the Perpendicular, so the hats came down and men's hair styles took on a new austerity to match the meagreness of the capitol in Perpendicular churches. The Tudor cap and bonnet and the enormously padded shoulders mimicked the four-centred Tudor arch. The Georgian house

is elegant, rational and humane, like the Georgian Church of deist bishops and literate fox-hunting parsons.

The Capitalist Revolution transfigured the British architectural landscape. The ugliness of its utilitarian buildings, mills, foundries, factories and industrial housing is all too apparent, but should not distract attention from the significance of its formal architecture. The Revolution was internationalist and so raided the world for models. The architecture of Greece, Rome, India and Egypt was imitated. Furniture and decor were copied from China and Japan, though somehow leaving behind the delicacy and importing the gross. Even the Gothic Revival, though a reaction to the Revolution, was borrowed from by the new *élite* for the construction of make-believe castles congruent with their new status as Lords of Wealth. In public buildings this imitation of the antagonist reached its zenith in Pugin's Houses of Parliament, but by then the Revolution had been Marcused.

THIS essay is a slightly edited version of the sixth chapter of Mr. Cooney's book, *Obelisks*, published by the Guild of St. George, Rose Cottage, 17 Hadassah Grove, Lark Lane, Liverpool, Lancs. at £3-0s-0d.

If a date may be placed on the actual moment of triumph of the Capitalist Revolution, it is 1832 when rampaging mobs of the poor escorted voters to the polls to force them to elect Whig reformists. When the Reform Bill was defeated in the Lords, riot and violence were let loose across the land. When the King refused to create new peers the reaction was so well-orchestrated that it can only be explained by conspiracy. The middle classes immediately began to withdraw their gold from the banks and to refuse taxes. Overnight pre-printed placards appeared in London: "To Stop the Duke go for gold", and notices in the windows of middle class homes declared: "No taxes paid here until the Reform Bill is passed". There were plans for local government in the north to be seized and the towns barricaded by "Committees of Public Safety" whilst the threat of disturbance in London kept the troops in the South. Supplies of firearms were hidden for use by the mob, and the Reformist press began insulting the King and the Royal Family. In these circumstances the Duke of Wellington ended opposition to the Bill in the Lords and it became law on June 4th, 1832.

The first reformed Parliament, in which the Whigs held 500 out of 658 seats, duly consolidated the democratic revolution with a Local Government Act (1832) which handed the boroughs in gift to the "Cotton Craft and the

THE PRINCESS AND THE PAINTER

Miss LUCINDA TRAILL Considers the Malaise and Possible Renewal of Modern Portraiture

MR. John Ward's recent portrait of the Princess Royal raises a number of interesting questions as to the directions which modern art might take and the possibilities of its reforming itself.

The malaise of modern art is not restricted to that art which sets out deliberately to be "innovative" by offering ever more piffing and neurotic variations on the iconoclastic rhetoric which Picasso had already exhausted half a century ago. When one visits people who live in old country houses, one is often faintly shocked to see crude daubs of modern people among the 18th- and 19th-century portraits. There seems to be a particular coarse-grained style adopted by modern portraitists, which robs the subject of any dignity, elegance or continuity with tradition which he may have had. It plebeianises both the subject and—if we may use the term—the work of art. When hung among older portraits, such a work regains that power to shock for which the more "innovative" modern artists strive in vain with their outworn and predictable excesses. The power derives from nothing in the work itself, but from its juxtaposition with real art and the realisation that sane and pleasant people can not only look at it but live with it on their walls.

When one asks such people why they hang paintings of this type they invariably repeat what they have been taught—that in the 18th century their ancestors were painted in 18th-century style, in the 19th century they were painted in 19th-century style and now they and their relations are painted in 20th-century style. This, it is held, is no break with tradition, merely a continuation of it. This is a very fine argument, and if we were all blind there could be no objection to it. However, one has merely to look at the 20th century paintings to see that they are something quite different from their predecessors; something which represents a dramatic and disturbing break from

them; something which is not merely inferior to them but which is a crude and insulting parody of them.

It may be argued that this is not entirely untrue to the subjects themselves—that modern people are cruder, less delicate and less dignified than their ancestors and that, even when they are representatives of ancient and noble families, they are pervaded with a proletarian spirit which was unknown not only to their forebears but even to their forebears' servants and farm hands, who had a natural dignity and sense of order which all but the most exceptional modern person of any class entirely lacks. We do not dispute this. Art is a product of its time just as the times are, in part, a product of their arts. The existence of these portraits on their walls, for example, must have a further coarsening and plebeianising influence upon the next generation, just as the farm hand could not so wholly have lost his natural rustic dignity without the coarsening and vulgarising influence first of alien American cinema films and then of even more alien British television programmes.

Mr. Ward's portrait of the Princess Royal is interesting because it may be taken to represent a step away from modern portraiture. This is more interesting in that it has affinities with similar steps away from modernism in architecture and even in music. It has, predictably, been criticised as "chocolate box", which is art-critical jargon meaning that the subject has been idealised or at any rate not coarsened. In this case we would say that the subject has been idealised. The style is reminiscent of certain late 19th- and early 20th-century works which were influenced by French Impressionism but which were not themselves Impressionist. This was in many cases a cautious compromise between conventionality and progressivism, and, curiously, the sketchiness of the style of Mr. Ward's picture seems to represent a similar compromise in being not too drastically different in superficial effect from the crude two-dimensionality of the prevalent modern style of portraiture. It has shocked the pious modernist, certainly, but is not the pure heresy that a richly textured picture with a real representation of mass and depth would have been.

The overall effect is of grace, femininity and dignity tinged with quiet romanticism and realised in soft, pastel shades. The Princess wears a charmingly romantic and rather regal dress. The background, a wall and fireplace of

a drawing room in Buckingham Palace, with large looking-glass overmantel, has a delightfully Victorian air of opulent chinoiserie.

Hostile criticisms reveal a great deal about what makes modern art what it is. They centre upon the subsumption of individual personality traits in the archetypal qualities of royalty and femininity. For modern art, as for modern thought, personality traits are all and archetypal qualities are nothing. This might be said to be a definition of modernism.

So, one critic, Mr. Brian Sewell, says "it is perfectly adequate as a document and perfectly inadequate as a work of art". He then goes on to criticise it purely as a document, which may seem to represent mental confusion on the part of Mr. Sewell, but actually represents the fact that, according to the modern notion of art, only the documentary element (whether personal—to the subject or the artist—or social) is understood at all. The modern distinction between "art" and "document" is only a distinction between two levels of document. "What it has lost completely," continues Mr. Sewell, "is the splendid vigour and directness of the woman. You can't see this figure striding through the wilderness of Africa laying about her with opinions." In other words it has made her feminine. That she is feminine is not in question. Journalists who have been on tours with her speak of her romantic instinct for frilly clothes, her perfect bone structure, beautiful hands, immaculate figure and glorious porcelain skin. The point is that a modern portrait is not supposed to draw out and display the archetypally feminine aspect of a female subject, but rather all that is most strident and brash, or to use Mr. Sewell's term "characterful". That these qualities are as conventional and predictable as the more traditional femininity; that any woman can be—and is—painted as a 'character' in this way, is of course never mentioned.

The other archetype, royalty, is criticised in similar terms. Mr. William Feaver says: "John Ward has put his gloss on the old-fashioned concept of a State portrait as a royal personage decked up to look as grand as possible. It's extremely superficial." The implication is that it is superficial because it is a conventional State portrait, which is rather curious, considering that many of the finest portraits in the history of Western art have been portraits of this kind.

A traditional portrait, especially a State portrait, concentrates before all else upon the

archetypal quality of the subject. A portrait of a lady takes her archetypal femininity as part of its theme. People, both in art and in life, were, until very recently, regarded, at least to some extent, in the light of the archetypal functions they fulfilled—the metaphorical robes they wore. Modern portraits concentrate only on the individual and on certain aspects of character which are fashionable. Almost every recent portrait of a woman I have seen has been attempting to show her as "characterful" in exactly the sense of the word intended by Mr. Sewell. On a more general plane we

may say that almost all traditional portraits have something in common when compared to almost all modern portraits. They have a richness, a depth and a dignity which, in the modern portrait, is replaced by the pervading plebeian or democratic ambience.

We may say, then, that each style sees the subject in terms of certain conventions and in the light of a certain ambience. The fact that one set of conventions, with its attendant ambience, is charming and the other coarse is sufficient to form a judgement between them, but we would say that there is something more than this. When a subject is portrayed in the light of his archetypal function, this need in no respect diminish the portrayal of his true character or of some aspect of his character; indeed, many formal portraits are splendid character studies, often illuminating depths of the soul which might hardly be apparent in everyday life. When, on the other hand, the portrait is intended to bring out the sitter's everyday personality—and usually the more obvious or more fashionable (that is to say, those that are most likely to be assumed in deference to the expectations of the times) aspects of it, this does stand directly in the way of the representation of anything deeper. A picture of a woman "striding and laying about with opinions", whether she is actually shown doing it or whether the picture merely seeks to portray this aspect of her persona, is hardly likely to reveal any of the intimate depths of her soul.

When we see human beings as bearers and embodiments of the great and eternal qualities such as royalty, femininity, nobility or motherhood, we elevate them to the plane of myth in the best and truest sense of that word. We clothe them in the light of divinity; and through the features of this divine and dignified humanity can shine forth depths of personality, virtues and vices, joy and tragedy,

←"Usurer Craft" (Cobbett), expropriating the property of the Corporations of the established boroughs without compensation in the process. It next passed a Poor Law (1834) which in the time-honoured custom of the Revolution herded into the internment camps of the Workhouse the useful idiots of the lower classes who had had their hour of glory marching and rioting without the slightest understanding of what they were "demanding" nor for whom. Moloch once again had devoured his children.

Strength and weakness and a thousand subtleties of soul to which pen can scarce do justice. When we see them merely as embodiments of the most outward and ordinary elements of personality—the sort of people who wear jeans and tee-shirts with silly slogans on them—we not only strip them of the dimension of dignity and divinity, but we fetter them to the world of everyday banality—we close off the possibility of seeing beyond the world of slang and small-talk into the subtle and intricate depths of the soul. In short, not only do we exchange a set of noble conventions for a set of vulgar conventions but, because those vulgar conventions masquerade as ‘character’ or ‘personality’, we lose the possibility of any glimpse of true personality in all its delicate depths and nuances, which are so alien to all that is brash, external and mundane.

This, of course, is a truth about modern life and not merely about modern portraiture; one may argue that modern portraiture merely reflects modern life, but it is not quite so simple. People who happen to be born into the modern world are not necessarily modernised to the core. Royal personages (to return to the example in hand) have many temptations—many of them presented as moral imperatives—to behave like plebeianised modern people. They also have an instinct for truly royal comportment and behaviour, and inner affections which transcend the vulgar externalities of the modern world. The same, substituting the word “feminine” for the word “royal”, may be said of all women, and, indeed, the same may be said of each of us, whatever our station in life, since royalty is the type of what is best and truest in all of us, as all know who have the smallest understanding of the inner meaning of myth and fairy tale. The portraitist may still decide whether he is to represent that aspect of his subject which reflects the noble archetype or whether to draw out the superficial and mundane character traits which are taken to be “the person” by the shallow modernist philosophy. This is the fundamental decision which then affects the style, the manner and the whole *aisance* of the portrait. One could not paint a profound archetypal portrait in the style of Mr. Lucien Freud; nor could one paint a vulgar modern study in the style of Memling or of Sir Joshua Reynolds; though there are what might be called intermediate styles which allow of some degree of ambiguity. It is such a style that Mr. Ward has adopted.

What shall we say of this painting? Is it a step toward the restoration of a true style of

portraiture or merely another guise of modernism? From what we have already said, it will be clear that there can be no true reformation of art without a reformation of life, or of society. While people continue blind to all archetypal pageantry and profundity, pursuing the exclusive cult of the outward personality, true art cannot flourish any more than a tree upon rock. And yet society changes in curious ways. Many changes are in the wind, uninteresting in themselves, yet fascinating for what they may lead to. And does not life, in any case, imitate art? People say this to be playfully paradoxical, but it is partly true—ideas, thoughts and ideals, which are expressed, and given form and vitality, among other ways, by art, are the ultimate shapers of the social order. Could the present cult of the outward personality have become the dominating force it is today if it had not been for Rousseau and Emily Brontë and a hundred other thinkers, painters, writers and musicians? They may not have created the cult, but they were essential to its formation. And so, if there are changes abroad today, would we not expect to see straws blowing in the wind of the arts—just a few at first?

A friend summed up rather neatly the feeling one has on first seeing this painting. She said that one might not know, if one did not know the subject, that it was a modern painting; yet if one knew that it was of a royal princess and had only seen a print of it, one would think that it was probably a watercolour sketch made in preparation for the final work. One might add that if one did not know that it was of a royal princess one would think it, perhaps, a rather delightful study of a younger daughter of some county family. It is a picture which has great charm—a charm which improves upon acquaintance, but if it has any pretensions toward being an old-fashioned state portrait then it has advanced them far too timidly; and even if it has not, it deals with a royal subject with an inappropriate lightness.

That said, the portrait has a romantic dignity and a feminine regality, for all its lightness, which is very unlike the usual style of modern portraiture. Not a fully-fledged straw in the wind, I think, but perhaps a wisp of thisle-down.

“When I am alone I do not have the effrontery to call myself an artist at all, not in the grand old sense of the word . . . I am only a clown, a mountebank. I have understood my time and have exploited the imbecility, the greed of my contemporaries.”

PABLO PICASSO

VALUING “VICTORIAN VALUES”

The Ambiguous Phrase which Epitomises the Modern Hankering after Traditional Solidity

WE remember hearing that certain modern politicians have, in recent years, called for a return to Victorian values. I recall thinking at the time that this was an interesting departure—something one could scarcely have imagined any one—least of all a politician—saying before the 1980s. Nonetheless one took little real notice, suspecting that whatever was meant in such a context by “Victorian values”, it was not what we should have meant by it. We did not imagine that any modern politician was seriously proposing to re-introduce the conditions in which widespread domestic service could flourish; we did not suppose that any politician under modern conditions could consider allowing the radical inequalities of wealth under which alone civilised life can flourish; we did not toy with the idea that any modern politician had either the desire or the power to re-introduce modesty into dress, decency into public entertainments, decorum into daily life or to extirpate from our national soul the manifold poisons of “pop culture”; nor did we muse upon the whim that, in this age of universal money-grubbing, there existed a politician seriously bent upon withdrawing the fiscal instruments which have deliberately destroyed, and prevented the re-formation of, a substantial leisured class,—thus allowing the development of a way of life and a system of education devoted to something other than purely utilitarian aims and making possible some semblance of what every age before our own has known as civilisation.

These things, certainly, would have been worthy of our attention, our admiration and our support, but we did not imagine them to be what any modern politician was proposing and, no doubt, we were right. Nonetheless, it is interesting to read this essay setting out the position of a modern advocate of “Victorian values”. It is published by the Centre for Policy Studies, which was originally co-founded by Mrs. Margaret Thatcher—the politician who is credited with the “Victorian values” statement.

Professor Himmelfarb wisely begins by grasping the artificial nettle of “hypocrisy”, —the word which is produced by conditioned reflex upon the modern tongue as soon as Victorian morality is mentioned. She notes that Mrs. Thatcher has been reported as saying that she would be pleased to restore all the

Victorian values with the exception of hypocrisy and comments: “If she did say that she betrayed a serious misunderstanding of Victorian values.” In saying this, Professor Himmelfarb herself betrays a serious misunderstanding of modern politics. Mrs. Thatcher may well have understood the importance and value of what is called hypocrisy, but she must also have known that if she mentioned “Victorian values” in public her opponents would immediately have set up the parrot-cry of “Victorian hypocrisy”; a cry which would have rung true to the unsophisticated majority of the electorate merely because they have been taught by repetition that the two words go together like “fish” and “chips”. It was a tactical necessity, overriding all intellectual considerations, for Mrs. Thatcher to pre-empt this attack by specifically exempting “hypocrisy” from the “values” which she favoured. In a popular democracy, a politician dare not make an intelligent statement which may be misunderstood by unintelligent people; or if he does, he must qualify it in a way in which tactics take precedence over truth. That is one of the minor arguments against universal suffrage.

Mrs. Thatcher may have been *intellectually* capable of arguing in favour of hypocrisy, as Professor Himmelfarb does and as we are about to do, but she was not *politically* capable of it.

Since we are under no such disability, let us proceed to dispose of the tired old argument about “Victorian hypocrisy”. La Rochefoucauld said that “hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue.” In a century which has been so sadly bereft of this particular homage one might put it more pointedly, if less neatly: —“hypocrisy is the proof that, while one may break the rules, one is still morally sane.” The higher the standards a civilisation sets for itself, the greater will be the incidence of hypocrisy. Men are imperfect and they will transgress; that is true in any age. When men are required to maintain the highest public standards, this will sometimes have to be achieved by the concealment of private vice. An age entirely without hypocrisy would be an age entirely without public morality. To say that the twentieth century is at least without Victorian hypocrisy is like saying that the Gestapo or the old-style K.G.B. are without

Victorian Values and Twentieth-Century Condescension, by Professor Gertrude Himmelfarb of the City University of New York is available as a pamphlet from the Centre for Policy Studies, 8, Wilfred St., London W.C.1. at £2-4s-0d.

hypocrisy: — "at least they do not *pretend* not to torture people." Nobody says this, because nobody approves of torture. Every one knows that a country where torture must be carried on in secret and will create a terrible scandal if it comes out is in a healthier moral state than a country where it is practised openly and without apology.

Murderers always try to conceal their guilt, yet I have not so far met any one who said: — "if we legalised murder, at least the murderers would not be forced to be so hypocritical about it." But that is *exactly* what people say, *mutatis mutandis*, about sexual morality. The fact is that wherever there is a moral law there will be a degree of hypocrisy. When people believe, or are forced to pretend to believe, in the moral necessity of what is called a "multi-racial society", then there will be politicians who, by their policies, compel the poor to live surrounded by Negro ghettos, and journalists who vilify the poor if they dare to protest, while themselves inhabiting pleasant pockets of affluent Englishness where a black face is rarer than a decent man in a television studio. It would be cant to say that one disagrees with "multi-racialism" because it breeds hypocrisy. "Multi-racialism" is a morality (or, at any rate, a pseudo-morality), and as such it *must* breed a certain degree of hypocrisy. If one disagrees with it, one *must* disagree with it openly and honestly because it is *wrong*, not because, as every morality always has, always will and always *must*, it creates occasion for hypocrisy in some of its adherents. In the same way, one may disagree with Victorian morality, but it is cant to disagree with it on the grounds that it sometimes gave rise to hypocrisy. If one wishes to abolish hypocrisy, one *must* have a society without any morality whatever, including the various moralisms of the modern "liberal consensus". If that is what one wishes, let one say so. If one wishes to argue against Victorian morality in particular, let one do that; but to say that it gave rise to hypocrisy is no more than to say that it was a morality.

Having disposed of the hypocrisy question, the main thrust of Professor Himmelfarb's book is to defend Victorian values firstly against the attacks of early twentieth-century intellectuals such as Lytton Strachey and the Bloomsbury Group and then against the modern Marxist and quasi-Marxist historians who wish to read history "from below", from the point of view of "*le petit peuple*", the 'common men', the 'anonymous masses', and who see the "bourgeois values" of Victorianism, both

in Victorian times themselves and as expounded by Mrs. Thatcher and others, as a mode of "social control" imposed upon the people from above. This, apparently, is supposed to be a Bad Thing, and the authoress is anxious to argue that the suggestion is unfounded. We, for our part, cannot see any objection to social control. It is the proper function and the duty of the higher orders of society to teach, guide and correct the lower orders. No one in practice acts otherwise. Marxist, quasi-Marxist and liberal leaders in government and in what they term "the media" have imposed their own morality upon the people for many years on a thousand issues, from the "multi-racial society" mentioned above, to the death penalty, abortion and sexual morality (or rather amorality). It might perhaps be adduced as a minor argument in favour of a measure of democracy that "the people" have been, on the whole, considerably more resistant to this sort of leadership than ever they were to the imposition of Victorian morality. However that may be, all moralities which are theoretically governed "from below", be they socialist or liberal-democratic, are already suffering from what Marx called "internal contradiction". For the intelligent man, the question cannot be whether a morality be imposed from above (as it always is) or from below (as it never can be), but whether it is *right* or *wrong*.

Nevertheless, Professor Himmelfarb is correct to point out that if industriousness, sobriety and thrift were "middle-class values" imposed upon the lower classes, it can only follow that the "natural" state of the lower classes was one of idleness, profligacy and drunkenness and that this is a rather curious position when adopted not by "reactionary historians" (we wonder whether Professor Himmelfarb has actually met a reactionary or whether they are fabulous beasts to be conjured with upon a printed page) but by "radicals" who profess to be sympathetic to the lower classes.

The argument of such historians is that the "bourgeois values" imposed upon the lower classes represent a "false consciousness" alien to those classes. Such an assertion, of course, can only make sense in the light of the implied hypothesis that there is a "true" or "natural" consciousness native to the urban proletariat which has not been created by the bourgeoisie. Quite apart from any other objections, such an hypothesis ignores the cardinal fact that *the proletariat itself is the creation of*

the bourgeoisie. Outside bourgeois capitalism, there is no proletariat. There are peasants, artisans and servants, all of whom have very different attitudes and values from those of the industrial proletariat, but there is no industrial proletariat. It follows, then, that all proletarian attitudes are directly or indirectly of bourgeois creation, and the idea of a "natural" proletarian consciousness independent of bourgeois interference is an unhistorical fantasy.—It is rather like saying that only a child who had been entirely uninfluenced by adults would have a "real" child-consciousness; and, indeed, this cult of the lower classes is, in our view, closely connected to the cult of the child as a repository of uninhibited spontaneity and creativity, and the earlier cult of the "noble savage". All three notions have their origin in the idea that civilisation is false and artificial, and that if one could somehow get behind it to the "real nature" of pre-civilised man, one would find something desirable.—I had been about to say, "something pure, noble and good", but this is true only of the earlier adherents of such theories: modern exponents tend, more or less explicitly, to desire something impure and ignoble.

Professor Himmelfarb's crowning defence of bourgeois values lies in the fact that they are eminently democratic and unaristocratic:—

Hard work, sobriety, frugality, foresight—these were modest, mundane virtues, even lowly ones. But they were virtues within the capacity of every one; they did not assume special breeding, or status, or talent, or valour, or grace—or even money. . . . They were, so to speak, democratic virtues. . . . They were also liberal virtues. By putting a premium on ordinary virtues attainable by ordinary people, the ethos located responsibility within each individual. It

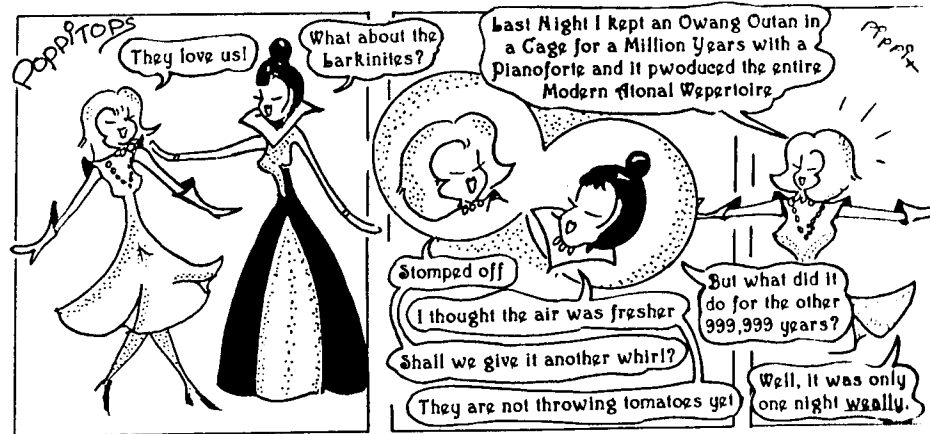
was no longer only the exceptional, the heroic individual who was the master of his fate; every individual could be his own master.

Here, Professor Himmelfarb is in agreement with another American professor, Alan Bloom, who, in his seminal book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, postulates that the 19th- and 20th-century bourgeois is pre-eminently the "democratic type of man"; and that the anti-bourgeois sentiments of the 19th century artist were essentially the product of a rightist and aristocratic sensibility reacting against democratic and liberal norms.

However this may be—and a full discussion of the implications of these ideas would take us far beyond the scope of this review—Victorian society retained a basis of hierarchy and deference which made it not wholly an aberration from the normal and traditional form of society, and indeed, in its revival of manners and morals as a vital force in the ordering of society, it was in some respects closer to tradition than the age which had preceded it. Professor Himmelfarb quotes the dictum of the great pre-Victorian, Edmund Burke:—

Manners are of more importance than laws. Upon them, in a great measure, the laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, and now and then. Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarise or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in. They give their whole form and colour to our lives. According to their quality, they aid morals, they supply them, or they totally destroy them.

Professor Himmelfarb comments:—"The stronger the voluntary exercise of morality on the part of each individual—the more internalised the morality—the weaker need be the ex ➤



TALES OF THE DYING DINOSAUR

SPARROWHAWK GLANCES AT THE LAST DAYS OF MODERNISM

A MOST OFFENSIVE WEAPON

It is well known that in any Peace Campaign, the first casualty is truth. Wars, on the other hand—small wars, at any rate—can sometimes have the effect of bringing truths out of hiding. For example, I have heard on more than one occasion some one saying that he had always strongly suspected that the B.B.C. and the broadcasting companies in general had a strong left-wing bias, but could never definitely prove it. It seems extraordinary to me that any one should have any doubt of it; but of course if one has a highly legalistic mind, or is used to arguing with people who are wilfully obtuse on the subject, many things can be difficult to prove. It has never been proved, for instance, that the late Mr. Alphonse Capone had any connexion with bootlegging or gangsterism. The only "crime" which was ever proved against him was the highly laudable and public-spirited one of tax-evasion.

◀ternal, coercive instruments of the State. For the Victorians, morality served as a substitute for law, just as law was a substitute for force."

In our age, when social conformity and voluntary restraint are breaking down to an unprecedented degree, the proliferation of laws, and the intrusion of policing and regulation into every area of life is the necessary, but rather ineffective, result. Laws are no substitute for manners and accepted norms; one cannot hold together a disintegrating world by force—and certainly not without applying far more force than any democratic politician can have at his disposal.

No doubt it is a self-regulated, more unanimous, more ordered society that the modern politician has in mind when he advocates "Victorian values";—but in a world which has thrown aside order, hierarchy and deference; in which the tone is set by people who despise both manners and morals, and tend to believe that civilisation is a mere system of repression; in a society which prides itself upon being "pluralist"—that is to say, a society which is by definition lacking in consensus and unanimity, by definition divided against itself—self-regulation, inherent morality and recognition of the distinction between right and wrong are the last things one will find. Even the word "values" itself belongs to the world of pluralism and relativism. One speaks not of morality, or truth, or virtue, but of "a set of values" which one happens to espouse and which could not, in the very nature of things, bind any one who did not happen to share them. In short, any one

During the Falklands War, however, the broadcasting companies appear to have completely "blown their cover". The entire tone of their news and commentaries made clear their anti-British bias, while, at a time when nine-tenths or more of the population were in full and enthusiastic support of the imperial adventure—as they would have been of many and greater imperial adventures had previous governments had the courage to defend the Empire instead of plunging the colonies, at American behest, into the Dark Ages of despotism, starvation and pseudo-independence—at such a time, I say, it appears that the broadcasting companies presented one "discussion programme" after another in which artificially packed audiences and carefully selected "panellists" gave the impression that the state of public opinion was the very opposite of what every one knew it to be. This is standard practice, of course—real public

who speaks of "Victorian values" shows thereby that he could never be a true Victorian and that he is as far removed as possible from the "values" concerned. A society which sees its fundamental principles as mere "values" has already rejected them as living truths capable of sustaining social cohesion; for mere "values" cannot bind.

The great irony is that this half-instinctive looseness, this second-nature rejection of absolutes, necessitates greater and greater strictness in the actual ordering of society, because no one can any longer be trusted to do right or to refrain from wrong unless a policeman is at his elbow. It is no coincidence that the libertarian, de-regulating ideology of "Thatcherism" also advocates identity cards and random police checks. It is no coincidence that the greatest of the Victorian moral relativisers, Marx and Nietzsche (the latter of whom invented the modern usage of the term "values") inspired the most totalitarian movements of the 20th century; and it will be no coincidence if the reactionary movement of the late 20th century should lead to a revival of true freedom in the 21st.

L.T.

STYLISTIC NOTE: The pamphlet is largely free from late-20th-century jargon, but at one point the authoress refers to Florence Nightingale as "Nightingale". When we asked her why she had adopted this ugly form, she replied that American editors "correct" her work to this style so unremittingly that she has wearied of fighting over the point.

opinion on the issue of race, for example, has always been wrapped in a blanket of enforced silence, while a rather gullible acquaintance recently told me that he was astonished to know (on the evidence of just such "discussion programmes") that the weight of general opinion was very much in favour of criminalising the corporal discipline of children by their parents. Part of the strategy, of course, is not only to misrepresent "general opinion" but also to change it by making the majority of normal people who do not share the neurotic fetishes of anaemic liberals feel that they are the eccentric minority. In time of war, however, with its heightened national consciousness, such standard trickery does not work, and even the most malleable, cathode-victim begins to realise that he is being lied to.

If the orchestrated bias of the broadcasting services is difficult to "prove" to those who have not eyes to see nor ears to hear—or who are determined not to use them—there are other, subtler matters of which evidence would seem even more difficult to obtain. It is obvious, for example, that modern broadcasting and "pop" culture is an assault on the soul, designed to rot the moral fibre, unstring the spirit and produce a loose, self-indulgent, will-less being chained to the fluctuating banalities of the present. If one were asked to name two aspects of the barrage of mental refuse which are more pernicious than the rest, I suspect most of us would be inclined to single out "rock" music, which is unadulterated soul-poison, and the cult of the "news", which does so much to make people feel a "part" of the unending trivia and nastiness of the gargantuan, inhuman modern world (or rather the carefully selected and sifted aspects of it which are chosen for publication) rather than of a natural, familiar world of human dimensions which has been all but destroyed.

It is difficult, as I say, to "prove" this sort of thing to those who have not the sensibility to perceive it for themselves—rather like trying to "prove" that the smell of rotten carrion is bad—but once again, the exigencies of war can bring truth out into the open in surprising ways. American "rock" culture and "news" culture have been used throughout the world as weapons of subversion, division, undermining, denaturing and sapping of moral fibre. They have been used, for the most part, subtly and advanced by the power of temptation rather than brute force,—the most ancient of precedents, as well as modern experience, showing this to be ultimately far more effective. I have, however, a cutting, dating from the

time when the American Government invaded Panama, in which, as with the B.B.C., the pointed tail, usually half-concealed, comes fully into the open. At the time of the cutting, the deposed ruler of Panama, General Noriega, had sought sanctuary at the Vatican embassy, which was then surrounded by American troops and tanks. The cutting states: "The American forces are continuing to bombard the embassy with loud rock music interspersed with news broadcasts and commentaries in order to break down resistance" (emphasis mine). What a chilling paradigm of the black art which has been practised upon the whole world. What a chilling indication that those behind the scenes know precisely the psychological effects of these supposedly harmless forms of "entertainment" and "information". And what a signal admission of what these things are and always have been:—weapons of war.

CORRUPTIO OPTIMI PESSIMA

I OFTEN come across little pieces of information by curious routes, not having patronised the modern mind-rotters for more years than I have any intention of mentioning. For example, I think it was in a cutting about dog-shows that I came across the phrase "now that we no longer have the Miss World contest...".

Now I have not had the Miss World contest for something over the number of years alluded to above. How long "we" (meaning the cathode-canaille) have not had it, I have no idea, but I imagine that it was discontinued because of pressure from the fatuous, grim-jawed, lip-rouge-free "feminist" lobby.

When the Thermidor coup put an end to Robespierre and the Reign of Terror, M. Joseph de Maistre, His Sardinian Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary at St. Petersburg said tersely: "Some scoundrels did away with some scoundrels." On reading this snippet, one was tempted to say: "A piece of worthless modern vulgarity has done away with a piece of worthless modern vulgarity". That the piece which did the exterminating was immeasurably more ugly, tawdry and stupid than the one which was exterminated is what I believe is known as progress.

I am not tempted to mourn. I always disliked the Miss World contest, because I always saw it as a trivialising affront to womanhood; a gaudy, exploitative Americanised circus, cheapening and insulting a thing that should be sacred. The interesting thing is that, leaving out, of course, the word "sacred", the yahoo-ettes who successfully hounded the

banal bazaar out of existence probably used much the same terms.

It is a curious turn of the downward spiral which can make true and decent sentiments, expressed virtually without alteration from their normal and proper form, the instruments of a corruption immeasurably blacker and deeper than that which they oppose. It is strange that the very words with which a sane and chivalrous sensibility can and must oppose that dreary, vulgar contest can, with a subtle alteration of meaning—or rather of underlying assumption—become the edged weapons of a movement a hundred times more tawdry, more cheapening, more vulgar and more undermining of civilised existence than the most grasping and exploitative beauty-contest executive could have dreamed of being.

One may, of course shrug one's shoulders cynically and say "well, that is progress"; but perhaps a more edifying response is to meditate for a few minutes on the deep and sinister significance of the old saying *corruptio optimi pessima*—the best, corrupted, becomes the worst.

VOTE WITH YOUR FEET

I HAVE been sent a section from one of the "better" Sunday papers dealing extensively with children and television. One ten-year-old girl writes: "People who think that T.V. pollutes children's minds are mad. In some ways, television is educational, as it tells children (and adults) to face up to the fact that life is life. . . I hate it when my mum says 'that's too disturbing'. But I just say: 'Bog off, mum, that's life and you have to face up to reality'."

What is horrifying is that children's minds are being polluted not only by the foulness of television itself, but by the grubby, callow, supercilious philosophy with which its perpetrators justify that foulness, and which casts a black, distorted shadow over life as a whole.

Predictably, this "conservative" paper spares no energy in defending television; but what seeps out from between the lines is that more people than ever are deeply disturbed by its effects. Doubtless a step in the right direction. Unfortunately, as long as people worry about the poisoning of children while continuing to think that they can poison themselves with impunity, they remain powerless. The only remedy against television at present is to vote with one's feet. Preferably with heavy boots on.

AHEAD OF HIS TIME

As an interesting postscript to Mr. Anthony Cooney's remarks upon the Duke of Wellington elsewhere in this issue, I cannot resist

quoting from the preface to Philip Guedalla's splendid biography of the Duke (aptly entitled *The Duke*), first published in October 1931:

"By a peculiar division of labour British history, quite considerable parts of which have been made by Tories, has been very largely written by Whigs; and Whig historians are a little apt to dispose summarily of Tory reputations. Viewed by such eyes, the Duke became a stiff-necked conqueror trailing an unwelcome scabbard into civilian assemblies. It was even feared that his faith in democracy was imperfect, that he did not trust the people. Why should he? Half his life had been devoted to a war against the 'French Revolution; and it was hardly likely that he would find Revolution any more congenial because it happened to be 'English. Crowds had no sanctity for him—he had seen far too many—and the purely arithmetical basis of democracy failed to impress the Duke. Shocked by this revelation, the 19th century tended to belittle his entire achievement. Perhaps the 20th may feel inclined to number it among his merits.

It seems that it did not feel so inclined. The 20th century, despite all the conventional eyewash and court flattery about its being a Time of Great Change, has been singularly sluggish in the realm of ideas. The 21st, on the other hand, may well take the view Guedalla suggests, with all that that implies. The alternative is another hundred years of repetition of the mistakes of the 19th;—probably with even more disastrous consequences.

The *Reactionary Review* is published by Perfect Publications, B.M. Perfect, London W.C.1. (full postal address) at £12-0s-0d per annum. It is intended to represent the full spectrum of contemporary traditionalist thought. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the editors. Potential contributors are encouraged to submit material, whether finished manuscripts or proposals for essays. Published material becomes copyright of Perfect Publications unless the writer requests otherwise at the time of submission. The editors reserve the right to edit material both for style and for length as necessary. A set of notes and advice for contributors is available on request. Publications wishing to reproduce material from this review should seek permission of the editors. Advertising may sometimes be accepted; please contact the editors for further information.